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ABSTRACT

Bullying, perhaps the most underrated problem in America's schools today, distracts minds and inhibits the learning process; if left unchecked, it can destroy lives and place society at risk. Bullying is defined as one or more individuals inflicting physical, verbal, or emotional abuse upon another individual or individuals. Subliminal abuses related to bullying--such as being teased, intimidated, or intentionally excluded or ostricized--can create fear, anxiety, and pain tantamount to that resulting from physical abuse. In fact, fear of other students motivated 1 of every 12 student dropouts. This book, divided into two sections and four chapters, examines the bullying problem and defines solutions. Chapter 1 discusses the serious and widespread bullying phenomenon; highlighted is the escalation of the problem, if ignored. Chapter 2 pinpoints bully and victim characteristics, causes, and manifestations; permanent scars for the victim and a gloomy future for the bully are predicted. Chapter 3 suggests heightened public awareness to generate support for handling the antisocial bullying phenomenon and chapter 4 explores the intervention strategies of educator action, parental action, and student action. A list of resources is included, and the appendices contain both a student and an adult bully awareness survey. (102 references) (KM)

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SET STRAIGHT ON BULLIES

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NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER

Set Straight on Bullies

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Introduction

Bullying is perhaps the most underrated problem in our schools today. Synonymous with fear and anxiety, bullying distracts minds and inhibits the learning process. If the problem goes unchecked, it can destroy lives and put society at risk. The immediate and long-term negative implications of bullying are documented — and they are serious.

Yet bullying remains an often misunderstood and consequently underreported problem in schools. Ironically though, most adults remember their schoolyard bully, often by name. In fact, very descriptive stories of once anxious or painful times can be recounted many years later by some former bullying victims.

Set Straight on Bullies attempts to synthesize current research on juvenile delinquent behavior, youthful aggression and bullying. This clinical understanding is important to validate the magnitude of the problem.

Bullying is defined as one or more individuals inflicting physical, verbal or emotional abuse on another individual or individuals. The results of physical bullying can range from the symbolic black eye to broken bones and even death, an extreme but not unprecedented consequence. Physically bullied victims are shoved, hit and kicked, as well as stabbed and shot.

Verbal and emotional bullying are less conspicuous and are not as likely to be reported. Subliminal abuses related to bullying — such as being teased or embarrassed, threatened or intimidated, or intentionally excluded or ostracized — can create fear, anxiety and pain tantamount to that resulting from physical abuse.

Statistics about the alarming number of fights on school campuses make a dramatic case for focusing immediate attention on this problem. However, it is understanding — or remembering — the emotional anguish bullying causes that puts the issue in perspective.

Set Straight on Bullies is divided into two sections. The first half establishes existing research by authorities on bullying. Bullies and victims are identified, and the characteristics of their past, present and future are discussed as they relate to this antisocial behavior.

The second half of the book focuses on solving the problem. The importance of increasing public awareness about bullying and supporting its prevention is stressed. A comprehensive collection of prevention strategies outlines specific roles for educators, parents and students.

Authorities from around the world on schoolyard bullying and victimization met at Harvard University in May 1987 to address this problem. The unprecedented gathering of researchers, psychologists and public relations professionals

produced the basis of a national prevention program. The plan, which is being administered by the National School Safety Center, sponsor of the Schoolyard Bully Practicum, included producing a prevention-oriented film and publishing this companion book.

To change actions about bullying, the experts admonished, it also would be necessary to change the public's attitudes and opinions about the problem. In part, the Practicum prompted the media to expose or rediscover the pervasive bullying phenomenon. Consequently, public understanding and support for prevention has been enhanced. The mandate is clear: Schoolyard bullying can be prevented by changing the actions of kids and by changing the actions *and* attitudes of adults.

To help practitioners assess attitudes and realities about bullying within their school or district, two sample surveys — one for students and another for their parents — are presented as an appendix. An order form for the Emmy-award-winning 18-minute educational film docudrama, "Set Straight on Bullies," also is included.

Stuart Greenbaum
Communications Director
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Section I: The Problem

SET STRAIGHT ON BULLIES

Chapter 1

The bullying phenomenon

Nathan Faris should have felt safe at DeKalb Junior-Senior High School. With just 200 students and located in DeKalb, Missouri, deep in America's heartland, the school seemed far from the problems of crime and violence faced by inner-city students in our nation's urban areas.

But Nathan, a slightly overweight, brainy 12-year-old, hated going to school. Other kids teased him and called him names. They called him "Chubby" and said he was a walking dictionary.

Such harassment isn't unusual among children; in fact, it's been around about as long as kids have been going to school. But Nathan felt the torment deeply — and he vowed revenge.

One spring day, Nathan brought a .45-caliber automatic and 24 rounds of ammunition to school. The pistol was going to be the "equalizer." Five shots were fired during his first-period social studies class. When everything was over, Nathan's lifeless body was stretched out on the schoolroom floor in a pool of blood, his own bullet in his head. A classmate, who witnesses said had struggled to wrest the gun away, also was dead.

A member of the class said afterward, "We were calling him names. We should have stopped. I should have stopped them. I'm just so sorry."

The situation is very real. This is one of thousands of incidents that occur in American schools — some as violent, some less — where good kids reacted the wrong way in the face of unbearable pressure and frustration.

"The chief school-related concern of students is the disruptive and inappropriate behavior of other students (bullies, thieves, etc.), not academic success," according to a handbook titled *The Middle Level Principalship* issued by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. "Both principals and parents underestimate student concerns for personal safety," the NASSP handbook reports.[1]

The primary concern of students, in a word, is *fear*. Many students simply are afraid to go to school. In fact, fear of other students is the reason reported by one of every 12 students for dropping out of school. When bullied

children do go to school, they often avoid certain places — such as hallways, certain playground areas and especially bathrooms — where their chances of being alone and vulnerable to an attack are increased.

Dr. Dan Olweus, a professor of psychology at the University of Bergen in Norway and recently a visiting fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study of Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University in California, was one of the first researchers to study the problem of bullying.

In estimates considered equally valid and comparable to those in the United States, Dr. Olweus said one out of seven youths — or about 15 percent of all students — is involved in some level of violence either as a bully or a victim. One in 10 students is regularly harassed or attacked by bullies, Dr. Olweus reported. His findings are based on surveys he conducted of more than 150,000 elementary and junior high school students in Norway and Sweden. Virtually every classroom is affected by the problem of bullying to some degree, he concludes.

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"The school is, no doubt, where most of the bullying occurs," Dr. Olweus stated. Yet, he added that "roughly 40 percent of bullied students in the primary grades and almost 60 percent in junior high school reported that teachers tried to 'put a stop to it' only 'once in a while or almost never.'"

His studies involved almost one-fourth of Norway's entire student population between the ages of 8 and 16. "The younger and weaker students are the ones most exposed to bullying," Dr. Olweus observed.

"The average percentage of students — boys and girls — who were bullied in grades two to six was approximately twice as high as that in grades seven to nine," he noted. "A considerable part of the bullying was carried out by older students. More than 50 percent of the bullied children in the lowest grades reported that they were bullied by older students."

Dr. Olweus found that the bullying problem was prevalent in city and rural schools, wealthy and poor areas, and among both boys and girls, although girls tend to be less physical in their abuse.

Somewhat surprisingly, he found that victims don't seem to share certain physical traits — such as red hair, a long nose or wearing glasses — except that boys who are victims tend to be physically weaker than their peers. For girls, Dr. Olweus found the opposite to be true — girl bullies usually are slightly weaker than their female classmates.

Dr. Olweus' premier study was commissioned by the Norwegian government after a sensationalized case in which bullied victims at school took what

they thought was "the only way out" — suicide.[2]

Bullying can be a matter of life and death.

In Clearwater, Florida, a 19-year-old student was knocked to the concrete locker room floor in a fight at his high school. He struck his head, slipped into a coma and died the following afternoon at a local hospital. Police arrested his assailant, a 17-year-old football team lineman, who said he hit the older boy twice after being taunted repeatedly in class.

Whatever the origin, the dispute caused one death and marred another person's life with a criminal record for manslaughter.

That incident of violence was settled with no weapons. But at Oakland Technical High School in California, a 19-year-old student met a 16-year-old in a showdown that ended in death and first-degree murder charges. The older youth told the court that his victim had been bullying him for a week before they ended up wrestling on the floor of a crowded school corridor. Thinking that the younger boy was going for a gun, the older youth almost instantly grabbed the weapon he was carrying and shot his victim to death with two bullets in the back.

Two more lives destroyed by bullying. The attorney for the killer blamed the slaying on a climate of fear in the school, fueled by gangs and weapons.

In these incidents, as in the case of Nathan Faris, it was not the "bully" who did the most damage but rather the victim, attempting to retaliate.

These examples of school violence, based on recent newspaper articles and court documents, draw a clearer picture of what is happening in schools today. Every one of these violent episodes had eyewitnesses, sometimes scores of classmates, whose memories forever will be marked with the bloodshed. All of the schools where these tragic acts occurred have experienced firsthand the destruction caused by bullying.

Under the euphemism of "bullying," we see a much broader, more serious affair. We see instances of assault and battery, gang activity, threat of bodily harm, weapons possession, extortion, civil rights violations, attempted murder and murder.

Everybody knows these are crimes. The fact that they were committed by minors upon minors does not make them less than crimes. The fact that they were committed on school grounds by students does not make them less than crimes.

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crimes.

Adults are protected against such crimes by the law, which certainly ought to extend equally to children, who generally are considered less able to defend themselves. If young people have no such protection, then they are being sent into a virtually lawless territory on a daily basis.

What is a child to do? Adults often pride themselves on being able to say to their youngsters, "I know how it feels." But do adults know what it feels like to go to school scared every day, knowing that you face potentially deadly harm?

Suppose the situation is compared with adult life. Imagine that you are new on your job. You advance in your position every year. Turnover is high, so there always are a lot of new faces. Some employees continually vie for dominance in the workplace, while others just want to be left alone — to do their work, get the job done and go their way.

But some person you don't know, and don't particularly want to know, keeps bothering you. He's always standing in the doorway you want to enter and doesn't move in any hurry. He borrows things from your desk and doesn't return them. You suspect he's deliberately provoking you.

You try to ignore him, but he's interfering with your work, hindering the completion of things you must get done. He tries to make you do things you don't want to do. He's interfering with your life. He becomes verbally abusive and, eventually, physically abusive. What can you do?

Simple — you tell a supervisor. He's reprimanded or fired. Or you call a cop, and he's under arrest. He's violating your rights. Or you could sue on the same grounds.

But what is a school kid going to do? Presumably, he has the same constitutional rights as adults. However, the student, as part of an institution, is under severe peer pressure and the effects of outdated traditions that say you don't go running to the teacher or principal with problems.

In fact, only about one-third of all violent crime committed or attempted against youths is even reported to authorities, said James R. Wetzel, director of the Center for Demographic Studies, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Victims usually regard such incidents as "private" and "took care of it" themselves, he noted, which is the type of street justice that spawns further retaliatory incidents.[3]

Penny-ante extortion is a common measure employed by bullies and groups of bullies to exact tribute from those they dominate and, at the same time, to line their pockets. In most cases, it's a bush-league version of the old "protection" racket organized by street gangsters more than a half-century ago but dealing in the same commodity — fear. It's pay or get hurt.

An 11-year-old boy was placed under arrest in his neighborhood after he put a knife to another boy's throat in demand of money. The incident happened during the summer, but a number of youngsters could have been in danger if the attack had occurred at school.

Teachers frequently may not even be aware about most student victimizations. An educator in the young knife-wielding criminal's school district said, "There is a code of silence. A youngster who gets beaten up doesn't want a reputation as a wimp who runs to the teacher. It's very difficult to get around that...."

Evidence indicates that parents and teachers may not really know how much fighting and other types of violence go on among kids. Even if they do know, some adults tend to take the attitude that they shouldn't interfere, that it's just something all children go through.

"School personnel aren't ignoring the problem of violence and bullying in the schools. Most of the time they simply are unaware of how extensive it is," Nancy G. Hardy said in the April/May 1989 issue of *Adolescent Counselor.* "Even parents will dismiss a child's expression of fear and tell him not to be afraid, or instruct him to 'tell your teacher if it happens again.' A classroom teacher doesn't always see what happens in a crowded hall, a noisy locker room, or an unpatrolled schoolyard," Hardy, a former president of the American School Counselor Association, pointed out.[4]

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A recent incident that illustrates the problems faced by junior and senior high school students occurred in Seattle, Washington, where a 13-year-old eighth-grader was kicked and beaten unconscious by a gang of six classmates outside the school lunchroom. The pint-sized terrorists deliberately blocked the view of teachers before attacking their victim, a star soccer player and school orchestra member. Calling themselves "Crips," presumably after the Los Angeles street gang, these young bullies sent out the message around school that they could beat up anyone they wanted. The six wound up in the hands of juvenile court.

Certainly classmates, and even teachers, were aware before the incident that these junior high school thugs posed a danger. The severely injured victim likely was not their first. This kind of gang activity, contrary to the bully of yesteryear, becomes a reign of terror.

Most of us sharply underestimate the amount and severity of crime that takes place in the school environment. Millions of crimes occur at schools every year, although just how much school crime is related to bullying is not known. Still, with about 15 percent of all schoolchildren affected either as bullies or victims, the bullying problem certainly has a significant impact on school crime and violence.

During 1987, almost 3 million students, teachers and others were victims of a criminal act on a school campus, according to estimates by the National Crime Survey. These school-related crimes included nearly a half million vio-

lent victimizations, many of which resulted in injuries.[5]

The landmark 1978 National Institute of Education *Violent Schools — Safe Schools* study, still the most comprehensive report of its kind, documented nationwide the seriousness of crime and violence in our country's schools.[6] In the decade since this important document was released, U.S. Department of Education statistics indicate that the number of student assaults has remained about the same, but reports of attacks on teachers has increased by at least 50 percent to about 7,500 per month. An article in the April 1988 issue of *School Intervention Report*, published by Learning Publications, Inc., reaffirms other important findings:

- Every month, more than a quarter million students are attacked in schools; a disproportionate amount of this violence involves teen-agers as both victims and perpetrators. Another approximately 2.4 million secondary school students are victims of thefts each month.
- Attacks, robberies, shakedowns, extortion and other forms of intimidation occur so frequently that more than one in five secondary school students said that they avoided restrooms out of fear; 800,000 students (8 percent) reported staying home from school one day per month out of fear.

The *School Intervention Report* cited additional evidence indicating that, if anything, the situation has gotten worse in recent years. Murder rates among juveniles have nearly doubled in the past two decades. Among young black males, homicide has replaced accidents as the leading cause of death. Some of the reasons for this increase in youthful violence, the article stated, "are poverty and urban decay, increased usage of alcohol and drugs among the young, increased availability of firearms, a greater willingness to use lethal weapons to solve disputes, high levels of family violence, and the spread of negative gang activity from inner cities to suburbs and to smaller urban centers."[7]

The first *National Adolescent Student Health Survey*, conducted in 1987, presents a current gauge of school crime and violence. The study, involving a representative nationwide sample of approximately 11,000 eighth- and tenth-graders from more than 200 public and private schools in 20 states, indicates how bad the situation has become:

- Almost half of the boys (49 percent) and one-fourth of the girls (28 percent) reported having been in a fight during the previous year. A fight was defined as two people striking one another or attacking each other with weapons.
- More than one-third of all students (34 percent) reported that someone threatened to hurt them, 14 percent had been robbed, and 13 percent had been attacked while at school or on a school bus during the past year.[8]

When these statistics are computed for students nationally at the secondary level, the survey presents some startling totals: more than 6.5 million boys and 3.5 million girls involved in fights during a school year; more than 4.5

million students threatened with bodily harm during a school year; and almost 2 million students robbed during a school year.

Research indicates that junior high school students are twice as likely to be robbed or assaulted as senior high school students. Minority students are more likely to be attacked or robbed at school than white students. Reports also show that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of violent school crimes are recognized by their victims, indicating that most of the offenders are fellow students rather than intruders.[9]

The devastating implications crime has on the victims are amplified in a 1981 report called *Violence: Homicide, Assault and Suicide* from the Division of Injury Epidemiology and Control, Center for Environmental Health and Injury Control, at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia. The report states:

> *Interpersonal violence may result in only a minor physical injury but has a devastating impact upon the victim's life in terms of fear, anxiety and subsequent restrictions in activities and movements. Victims may become quite isolated, and the changes they make in their...pattern of activities may markedly constrict their freedom and lower the quality of their lives. The changes remind them of the new fears that have become part of their lives.*[10]

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More than one survey of students themselves has measured their own concern about the problem of fighting in school. A nationwide survey of high school seniors, reported recently by the National Center for Education Statistics, found that 29 percent thought their school had a serious problem with fighting. Among blacks polled, the figure increased to 39 percent.[11]

By its very nature, interpersonal violence — excluding incidents motivated by monetary gain alone — often is associated with factors such as "the ideology of male dominance," sexual identity, self-esteem or discrimination, according to research by the Centers for Disease Control. In other words, researchers say, the motives are power, control, punishment and getting one's own way.[12]

These same factors describe the phenomenon of bullying, which undoubtedly prevails more noticeably in schools because young people often differ greatly both in physical size and in psychological development.

It used to be considered trivial when a bumping in a school corridor, or a taunt or insult, would bring about a fistfight and perhaps a bloody nose. Today it's often more than a bloody nose; permanent injury, or death, are all-

too-frequent results of schoolyard tension.

Many of the former fist fights are being replaced by gunfights. One high school student from New York expressed the problem quite graphically in a student essay on "Weapons in School." He said, "Before when you had problems in school you would just fight. Today you just get shot in the kneecaps." He went on to state that "students bring weapons into school for several reasons...to get revenge...for protection, to show off or to use instead of fighting."

One of the reasons for this is reflected in the recent *National Adolescent Student Health Survey*, which revealed that nearly one out of every four boys admitted carrying a knife to school at least once during the past year. About 40 percent of boys and 24 percent of girls stated that a handgun was accessible to them if they wanted one. Three percent of the boys surveyed said they had brought a handgun to school at least once during the past year.[13]

Psychologists say that many students who carry weapons have no criminal intent — they merely mean to protect themselves from bullying individuals or from gangs suspected of being equally armed and dangerous.

"A gun can give someone a sense of power and a security blanket," Houston psychologist Rion Hart said in a recent *Newsweek* magazine article. Dr. Hart explained, "They haven't really thought out what they're going to do with it until something happens. But then it's too late. Hallway disputes that were once settled by fists end in gunfire."[14]

Trend-watchers say that the use of weapons — like another scourge of youth, drugs — already has penetrated down from the high school level to junior high schools, and symptoms are showing up on a lesser scale of violence in grade schools. And it's not simply the number of weapons appearing in school that is significant — it's the sophistication and effectiveness of the weapons that is alarming.

In Grand Junction, Colorado, the mother of an 8-year-old girl, who was new at the school and was taller and heavier than her classmates, complained that her daughter was beaten, threatened and pushed into the path of oncoming cars by her elementary school peers. The abuse got to the point where the girl refused to go to school. The mother threatened legal action against the school district if teachers and administrators did not remedy the situation.

The legal liability in cases of school crime and violence is materializing nationwide in America even though only one state so far — California — has created a law expressly defining the rights of student (and teacher) victims.

The authors of *School Crime and Violence: Victims' Rights*, attorneys James A. Rapp, Frank Carrington and George Nicholson, state that legal cases across the nation generally have affirmed specific rights for school victims. These rights include:

- To be protected against foreseeable criminal activity.
- To be protected against student crime or violence that can be prevented by adequate supervision.
- To be protected against identifiable dangerous students.

• To be protected from dangerous individuals negligently placed in school.[15]

Legal action protesting the violation of these rights already is in the courts. In San Francisco, where five bullies allegedly ganged up to punch and intimidate one fifth-grade boy every day at school, the boy refused to go back to classes and his mother initiated legal action. She and her son sued the school district for $350,000, claiming that the child's right to a safe, secure and peaceful school had been violated.

The potential exists not only for immediate harm to students but also for further broad implications for teachers, school administrators and the school itself, whether a bullying incident evidences itself in name-calling, teasing or harassment; petty theft or extortion of lunch money; harsh pranks; assault and battery; serious injury or death; or just a minor jostling in a school hallway.

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In a 1986 California case involving an Oakland youth who was bullied for several years, an Alameda County Superior Court judge declared, "Today students and staff of public schools attend schools where drug dealing, theft, robbery, rape, assault and even murder are common occurrences."

Citing the 1982 state initiative approved by voters called the Victims' Bill of Rights, the judge stated, "Safe, secure and peaceful schools are constitutionally mandated."[16]

The ruling opened the gates for the parents of schoolchildren who are threatened or injured to sue the school district for large sums of money. The decision was overturned in 1989 when the California Court of Appeal ruled that school districts may not be held monetarily liable for campus violence under the Victims' Bill of Rights. The appellate judges determined that the initiative's "safe schools" provision simply "declares a general right without specifying any rules for its enforcement." An appeal of the decision to the California Supreme Court was denied, but the state law still allows students to sue school systems for negligence.[17]

The U.S. Supreme Court itself recently issued pronouncements recognizing the problem of creating safe schools. "Without first establishing discipline and maintaining order, teachers cannot begin to educate their students. The school has an obligation to protect pupils from mistreatment from other children," declared Justices Lewis Powell and Sandra Day O'Connor in an opinion on a New Jersey case.[18]

Even though bullying is not just a school problem, schools are the place where young people spend the majority of their days. However, the presence

of bullying on campus does not mean that we must have some sort of police substation at every grade school, junior high and high school in the country. It also does not mean that teachers and administrators, already burdened to the limits by the pursuit of education and the demands of each session's curriculum, must pin on deputy badges in addition to everything else.

But something must be done. In Los Angeles, where gang-related, cowardly "drive-by" shootings of innocent bystanders have become well-publicized among the young, a 15-year-old girl wrote to her principal, "I want to say I'm too young to die.... That could have been you or me or a loved one who got shot. I wish our school could help out our society. If we can't help our world out, then who can?"

Most students are not directly involved in violent activity, but simply witnessing the brutality that is going on around them can be distressing enough. Students themselves can be a potent resource in combating crime. Some student action groups have taken their own steps to address the problem.

Most students are not directly involved in violent activity, but simply witnessing the brutality that is going on around them can be distressing enough. Students themselves can be a potent resource in combating crime. In fact, some student action groups have taken their own steps to address the problem.

At Plainfield High School in New Jersey, dozens of students demonstrated in protest about an outbreak of fighting on campus. They formed an organization they called SAFE, Students Against the Fighting Epidemic. Their picket signs read: "SAFE, that's what we want to be."

The school principal told reporters, "Youngsters reflect the violence in their communities and it manifests itself in the school. I don't think our high school is any different than the community within which it sits. These things are oftentimes things that have boiled over from within the community."

Schools only reflect what is happening in the world around them, many experts say. But the truth is, the schools are involved. Schools, in fact, can get to be like a bad neighborhood all of their own. Adults know enough to avoid a bad part of town where trouble is rife. But youngsters don't have the same option, not if the trouble area is their school. We *make* kids go to school, and the law even insists that we send them.

Because students must go to school, anything that can be done about bullying — and the many other related school problems — might have sweeping effects. The total school atmosphere could be enhanced and, as a result, everyone's day would be easier — students, parents and educators alike.

In his article "Promoting Social Competence in School Children," Vanderbilt University psychologist Kenneth A. Dodge observed: "In a day of increasing demand for efficient use of classroom time, teachers are faced with the controversial issue of how much to emphasize basic academic instruction

in contrast to social development. Teachers and parents sometimes question the merit of spending time on children's peer relationships when the major task of educators is to train the intellect."

Recent evidence suggests, Dr. Dodge said, "that in terms of significant social and personal goals, such a perspective may be short-sighted. Over the past 10 years, a body of evidence has accumulated to demonstrate rather convincingly that children who cannot relate effectively in social interactions with classroom peers during the first three years of elementary school are at great risk for a variety of problems in adolescence and adulthood. These problems include excessive absenteeism, dropping out of school, juvenile delinquency, psychiatric impairment, depression, psychopathy, schizophrenia, alcoholism and suicide."

Dr. Dodge continued, "Researchers have distinguished between the aggressive, antisocial child who gets into fights and is actively rejected and disliked by peers, and the shy, withdrawn child who is not highly liked by peers but is not actively disliked either.... The problems of the socially rejected, aggressive child stand out as being in need of attention."[19]

For too long, the attitude has persisted that all children's dealings with their peers — even when they involve bullying and fighting — are a normal part of growing up, a phase, a sort of "rite of passage." These experiences are supposed to prepare youths for the real, cold world outside that awaits them.

Both the bully and his victims must receive attention from the very start or the problem will be magnified from kindergarten through high school and on into adulthood, for which schools ostensibly intend to prepare youngsters.

For too long, the attitude has persisted that all children's dealings with their peers — even when they involve bullying and fighting — are a normal part of growing up, a phase, a sort of "rite of passage." These experiences are supposed to prepare youths for the real, cold world outside that awaits them.

Actually, this notion was advocated in the early part of this century, according to a study on teacher attitudes toward physical aggression among children. Many experts during this time period argued that children, especially boys, should be encouraged to fight and injure one another in their play because such activity would purge their aggressive tendencies. Even when this attitude was discarded decades later, the notion that "boys will be boys" and such disputes are best left alone has persisted.[20]

Part of this approach is the false but often-heard advice that if one stands up to a bully just once, that will end the problem. So punch him in the nose. Knock him down. Beat him up.

Times have changed.

In Florida recently that advice was given by a father to his 12-year-old son who had been picked on for weeks by a bully. The child got his baseball bat

and went after the bully. He slugged the bully across the shins three times.

Sheriff's deputies arrested the father for child abuse. "It's a misdemeanor to 'knowingly permit physical or mental injury to a child,'" a sheriff's office representative said.

Such disputes can escalate beyond baseball bats. Often the youth retaliating against the bully suffers further anguish.

Studies on situational factors in disputes have revealed that the behavior of the victims significantly altered the outcome of the dispute. Assertive victims, and victims who responded by displaying a weapon, are more likely to suffer aggravated harm and even death. Retaliation — even in the name of self-defense — clearly has been found as a key element in escalating violence.

Almost invariably, the bully is the instigator in schoolyard crimes. Whether he is a coward acting under cloak of gang membership, a bluff with flexed muscles, or a truly aggressive youth demonstrating his misguided proficiency in power, it all starts with the bully.

Our knowledge about bullies and their victims continues to be expanded by new research, clinical reports and case studies.

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Chapter 2

Bullies and victims

Whether bullying is done by an individual or a group, it creates a climate of fear that pervades a campus.

The fact that some schoolchildren frequently are harassed and attacked by other children has been dramatized in literary works. In the 1850s English novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, author Thomas Hughes vividly describes how a younger boy at an English boarding school is forced by a group of older bullies to undergo a painful and sadistic roasting in front of an open fire.

Although the novel presents a somewhat dramatic account, Geoffrey Walford of Aston University in Birmingham, England, said, "The roasting is based on fact, for there is a great deal of evidence that such gross bullying had been prevalent in most of the public schools since their foundation and had continued throughout the Victorian era." Bullying and violence were a prominent part of England's public school system during that era, Walford pointed out. "Older boys forced those younger and weaker than themselves to perform a multitude of menial tasks for them and, if they failed to do them to satisfaction, were allowed to beat and abuse them," he said.

Walford explained that "bullying was legitimized as part of a wider system of corporal punishment," which commonly included students being "flogged," or beaten, by the Victorian schoolmaster as a form of discipline. "For not only did young boys suffer at the hands of older boys, they also frequently lived in fear of masters and the headmaster.... In such a climate, there is little wonder that boys also did violence to those younger than themselves," he said.

Bullying continues to be a problem at English public boarding schools today. In a recent study Walford conducted at two schools, he found that 10 percent of the students mentioned bullying when they were asked what they disliked most about life at the school and what were their most serious personal problems caused mainly by life there. "Bullying in these schools is no longer a matter of gross physical abuse, but is a mixture of constant teasing and mild violence," Walford concluded. "For some boys, however, the effects may still cause considerable harm. At the very least, such behavior leads to much un-

happiness for the victims."[1]

Victims of bullying often are left with lasting emotional scars long after their physical torment has ceased. Many adults vividly remember a schoolyard bully from their own childhood and how they or others were victimized. Examining the history of England and other countries, as well as America's past, shows that the bullying phenomenon has been around about as long as children have been going to school.

Bullying is perhaps the most enduring and underrated problem in our schools. Despite the immediate and long-term effects of bullying, its prevention has been neglected for years and American schools have not systematically addressed how to combat this prevalent problem. Psychologists at least are beginning to understand more about the causes and characteristics of bullies and their victims.

As a person, the bully is classified as a type of manipulator. In his book *Man, the Manipulator*, Everett L. Shostrom writes: "The bully exaggerates his aggression, cruelty and unkindness. He controls by implied threats of some kind. He is the Humiliator, the Hater, the Tough Guy, the Threatener. The female variation is the Bitch or Nagger."

Victims of bullying often are left with lasting emotional scars long after their physical torment has ceased. Many adults vividly remember a schoolyard bully from their own childhood and how they or others were victimized.

He cites psychologist Frederick Perls, who says the bully "victimizes other people, capitalizing on their powerlessness and apparently gaining gratification by exercising gratuitous control over them."[2]

The child who is a chronic bully is very quick to anger and to use force, has a need to dominate others, displays a positive attitude toward violence, and shows little empathy for his victims, according to a *Parents* magazine article titled "Bullies," which synthesized the research of several experts on the subject.[3]

In the book *The Life-style Violent Juvenile*, authors Andrew H. Vachss and Yitzhak Bakal suggest that some youths adopt antisocial ways of achieving their ends — peer respect or material goods — because such tactics have proven effective in the world in which they live.

"To such a juvenile, gang rape is not antisocial, mugging is not wrong, and tomorrow is dimly (if at all) perceived.... Life is a lottery and gratification delayed is probably gratification denied," Vachss and Bakal contend. "The juvenile who embraces a life-style of violence perceives few options in his world; he will either exploit or be exploited. In his world, everybody commits crimes; some get caught, even fewer are punished."[4]

The similarities between these types of youths and the adult sociopaths who generate fear throughout the land, as reflected in crime statistics, becomes clear. Such juveniles are not regarded as mentally ill, although their behavior has not been overlooked by psychiatry.

The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* classifies the bully as an aggressive type of "conduct disorder" whose "essential feature is a repetitive and persistent pattern of conduct in which either the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated."[5]

Some authorities believe that the bully is not so seriously antisocial as to be diagnosed under the clinical category of a "conduct disorder," which is used to denote the seriously disturbed child, according to a February 1988 article in *Psychology Today*. Instead, some experts believe that bullies are just a subset of aggressive kids who seem to derive satisfaction from harming others, physically or psychologically. Such aggression is their way of life, the article states, and bullies don't pick a fair fight.[6]

Dr. Sigmund Freud himself saw aggression as a basic human drive that had to be properly channeled by the controlling mechanisms of the ego and superego.[7] But many psychologists today regard aggression as a product of faulty thinking coupled with a penchant for retaliation that verges on the paranoid.

Dr. Sigmund Freud himself saw aggression as a basic human drive that had to be properly channeled by the controlling mechanisms of the ego and superego. But many psychologists today regard aggression as a product of faulty thinking coupled with a penchant for retaliation that verges on the paranoid.

"Aggressive children see the world with a paranoid's eye," said Dr. Kenneth A. Dodge, a psychologist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. "They feel justified in retaliating for what are actually imaginary harms," he said.[8]

Dr. Dodge's research shows that aggressive children tend to see slights or hostilities where none are meant — even in videotaped scenes of conflict involving other children — and they take these imagined threats as provocations to strike back. "This is the kid who gets angry easily, has temper tantrums, and might get into a lot of fights, but doesn't necessarily start them," he explained. "Somebody calls him a name or jostles him in the hallway and instead of tossing it off with a joke as other children do, he overreacts."[9]

In making some observations about bullying victims, Dr. Dodge said, "One large problem for these children is that they can't think of a friendly response that preserves their own dignity and self-image. Being teased or insulted is an affront that they can only respond to by hitting, crying or running away. They need to learn other approaches."[10]

Educators have had considerable experience with bullies.

"I think it's all about power," said Dr. George McKenna, a Los Angeles area school district superintendent who has been honored nationally for his effective leadership. "Bullies get comfortable with an environment they can control, and they don't mind hurting others to get their way," Dr. McKenna explained.[11]

Research indicates that the bully's whole life often is stacked against him,

as if he's doing penance for inflicting torment on others. While the victims usually survive their oppression, although not unscathed, the bully appears self-doomed. One report calls the typical bully "a lifelong loser." In fact, research has revealed that bullies have about a one-in-four chance of ending up with a criminal record by the age of 30. In comparison, a child normally has about a one-in-20 chance of growing up to become a criminal.

These and other valuable findings were discovered through a unique 22-year research project by Dr. Leonard D. Eron and Dr. L. Rowell Heusmann, professors at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Their longitudinal study began in 1960 by researching an entire group of third-grade students — 870 children — and then following their progress into adolescence and adulthood by conducting subsequent interviews with more than 400 of their original subjects.

"Our most striking findings," Dr. Eron said, "had to do with the remarkable stability of aggressive behavior over this 22-year period. Children at age 8 who started a fight over nothing, who pushed and shoved other children, who took other children's things without asking, who were rude to teachers, and who said mean things to other children — behaviors that often are passed off as normal, as 'boys being boys' — these same children, by the time they were 19, were more likely to be cited in juvenile court records and to have not achieved well educationally."

One report calls the typical bully "a lifelong loser." In fact, research has revealed that bullies have about a one-in-four chance of ending up with a criminal record by the age of 30. In comparison, a child normally has about a one-in-20 chance of growing up to become a criminal.

When the childhood bullies were compared to their less aggressive classmates, Dr. Eron noted, "by the time they were 30, these individuals were much more likely to have been convicted of crimes; to have been convicted of more serious crimes; to have more moving traffic violations; to have more convictions for drunken driving; to be more abusive toward their spouses; to have more aggressive children; and to have not achieved well educationally, professionally and socially. The results were independent of intelligence and social class as measured at age 8."

Some specific results of their research were:

- The more aggressive boys were at age 8, the more likely they were to get in trouble with the law as adults.
- The most aggressive boys were about three times more likely to be convicted of a crime than their peers.
- The most aggressive boys were less apt to finish college and have good jobs.
- Girl bullies grow up to be mothers of bullies. Punishing their children may be the only area in which a female can express aggression without fear of social censure or retaliation.
- Aggression is transmitted from parent to child, thus perpetuating the cycle.

"It is harder and harder for kids to change once the pattern is set and time goes on," Dr. Eron observed.[12]

Dr. Dan Olweus, a psychology professor at Norway's University of Bergen and an international authority on the bully-victim problem, has drafted a composite description of a bully and his victim that reflects some of the same characteristics. First he paints the view of the bully's victim:

Henry was a quiet and sensitive 13-year-old boy in sixth grade. For almost two years, he had now and then been harassed and attacked by some of his classmates. Two of them were particularly active in trying to degrade and embarrass him. During the last couple of months, their attacks on him had become more frequent and severe, for one reason or another.

Henry's daily life was filled with unpleasant and humiliating events. His books were pushed from his desk all over the floor, his tormentors broke his pencils and threw things at him, and they laughed loudly and scornfully when he occasionally responded to the teacher's questions. Even in class, he was often called by his nickname, the "worm."

As a rule, Henry did not respond. He just sat there expressionless at his desk, passively waiting for the next attack. The teacher usually looked in another direction when the harassment took place. Several of Henry's classmates felt sorry for him, but none of them made a serious effort to defend him.

A month earlier, Henry had been coerced into a running shower with his clothes on. His two tormentors also had threatened him several times to give them money and to steal cigarettes for them at the supermarket.

One afternoon, after having been forced to lie down in the drain of the school urinal, Henry quietly went home and ended his life....

Dr. Olweus goes on to describe the bully in this scenario:

The most active of Henry's bullies, Roger, was known by the teachers in the school to be a tough and aggressive boy. Not only did he often attack and oppress other children at school, but he also was impudent and oppositional to adults and, in particular, the female teachers wanted to have as little to do with him as possible.

When a teacher occasionally tried to reprove him for his behavior on the playground, Roger was quite skillful at talking himself out of the situation, putting the blame on his victims or other schoolmates.

In elementary school, Roger's academic performance was roughly average. But in junior high school he showed less and less interest in his schoolwork, and his grades deteriorated slowly and steadily. During these years he also started associating with somewhat older youngsters in the neighborhood who often were drunk and engaged in petty criminal activities.

At 17, Roger and another boy were caught attempting to break into a supermarket to steal beer and cigarettes.... At 19, he was convicted of aggravated assault.... At 23, Roger had been convicted five times for various crimes and had spent one month in jail.

"Although extreme, these cases illustrate what may happen when a number of unfortunate circumstances coincide," Dr. Olweus said. "These stylized portraits are composed of characteristics and events associated with several different individuals," he added.[13]

Citing research done by Dr. Olweus and other bullying experts, *Parents* magazine noted that bullies share some common characteristics: "Children who are bullies also tend to have greater than average strength, are of average intelligence but often display below-average school performance, and have few or no friends. Bullies are mostly boys, and they are generally older than their victims; ethnicity and family income level do not appear to be significant factors."[14]

What makes bullies behave the way they do? In general, psychologists seem to agree that a bully at school often is a victim at home.

A bully's parents are very likely to use harsh, usually physical, forms of punishment, though violent emotional outbursts are a common variant, according to the Parents magazine article. "Often, even if the child is not himself abused, he may see one of his parents abuse the other or another child in the family," the article states. "The lesson the child learns from his environment is that might makes right."

"The roots of bullying, say psychologists, rest more in the child's home than in the genes," Dr. Lawrence Kutner wrote in a *New York Times* syndicated article.[15]

Dr. Eron found that the parents of aggressive children he studied tended to punish their offspring both harshly and capriciously, alternately blowing up at them for minor infractions and ignoring them for long stretches of time. Other researchers say that such parents punish more according to their own moods than in response to the child's behavior, an article in the May/June 1989 issue of *Hippocrates* magazine pointed out.[16]

"Parents of bullies treat their children differently than parents of regular kids," said Dr. Arthur Horne, an Indiana State University counseling psychologist who has studied bullies and their families for almost a decade. Dr. Horne's research demonstrated that parents of bullies do not use a fraction of the praise, encouragement or humor that other parents use in talking to their children. Put-downs, sarcasm and criticism are what the bullies experience at home.[17]

A bully's parents are very likely to use harsh, usually physical, forms of punishment, though violent emotional outbursts are a common variant, according to the *Parents* magazine article. "Often, even if the child is not himself abused, he may see one of his parents abuse the other or another child in the family," the article states. "The lesson the child learns from his environment is that might makes right. Moreover, since lack of parental interest is another common feature of these families, the modeling of aggressive behavior

is not counteracted by any efforts by the parents to teach more appropriate behaviors."[18]

Dr. Gerald R. Patterson and his associates at the Oregon School of Learning Center in Eugene have observed, assessed and monitored families with delinquent youngsters in great detail. These parents, they found, frequently engage in behaviors that both indirectly and directly encourage the antisocial behavior of their sons.

Observations showed that such parents generally lacked skills in monitoring the whereabouts of their children, in disciplining them for antisocial behavior, in handling antisocial behavior within the family, and in modeling effective prosocial "survival skills."

The parents of aggressive schoolchildren, Dr. Patterson noted, typically punish according to their mood rather than according to what the child has done. When the parent is angry, the child is punished. If the parent is in a good mood, the child can get away with anything. Such an atmosphere breeds the concept that life is a battleground and that threats surrounding us might befall anyone at any time.[19]

"Children acquire aggressive habits through interaction with their environment," stated Dr. David G. Perry, a professor with Florida Atlantic University's Department of Psychology. "Many aggressive children come from homes in which the parents (and siblings) make the child feel insecure and rejected, bombard the child with aversive stimuli, teach the child that force is the only way to escape such aversive treatment, and fail to teach the child that aggression is unacceptable."

Dr. Perry noted that such "teachings" are learned not only at home but also at school — and from the television set. Children learn from television that athletes, movie stars, politicians and other "heroes" achieve success through aggression. When children are subjected to repeated frustration and rejection, they come to perceive the world as a hostile place and see striking back as their only means for survival. This destructive mode is adopted by aggressive children, Dr. Perry added, and they view such behavior as a legitimate means of achieving what they desire.

"Children who are permitted to express their aggressive impulses, even occasionally, will develop habits of persistent and intense aggression that are very difficult to-modify," he commented. Dr. Perry's research, based largely on questionnaires given to elementary school students in grades 3 to 6, found that victims of bullying tend to be children with low self-esteem.[20]

Aggressive children tend to focus on the negative and hostile aspects of their environment, noted Dr. Jan Hughes, an educational psychologist at Texas A&M University, after specific research into the subject.[21]

"We find that bullies have a strong need to control others," said Dr. John Lochman of the Duke University Medical Center. "Their need to be dominant masks an underlying fear that they are not in control, and they mask the sense of inadequacy by being a bully," he said.

"Aggressive children also seem to have a perceptual blind spot for their own level of aggression," Dr. Lochman noted. In a study in which he paired one aggressive and one non-aggressive boy, Dr. Lochman found that the aggressive boys underestimated their own aggressiveness and more frequently viewed the other child as the aggressor. "These kids perceive hostility in their peers," he added.[22]

After being subjected to erratic parental attacks during their early years, some children naturally become wary and misinterpret the actions and intentions of others. Dr. Olweus, whose more than 20 years of studies support these findings about how bullies are treated by their parents, says that bullies usually are children who have "too little love and care and too much 'freedom' at home."[23]

Many of the characteristics used to describe the schoolyard bully are similar to the characteristics used to describe the violent youth gang member. They tend to have a strong capacity to deal with fear, are not easily intimidated, and have little interest in responsible performance. They want to be in charge, and they consider themselves basically decent because they are able to rationalize their actions in terms of justifiable behavior.

Bullies choose to victimize defenseless kids because it reminds them of their own defenselessness against the abuse they suffer at home and the shame and humiliation it causes them, speculates Dr. Nathaniel M. Floyd, a psychologist for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Southern Westchester, New York. He believes that bullies feel threatened by their victims' vulnerability. "In every bully, there is the shadow of the little kid who was once abused himself," Dr. Floyd contends. These youngsters bully others, he adds, "as if to say, 'You're the victim, not me.'"[24]

But what about the victims?

While bullies generally are stronger than others their same age, victims most often are weaker than their peers, as well as being more anxious, insecure and lacking in self-esteem.

These characteristics — anxiety, shyness, cautiousness, sensitivity, low self-esteem, a tendency to cry or flee when attacked — form what Dr. Olweus calls an anxious personality pattern. This type of personality, combined with physical weakness, seems to describe most chronic bullying victims.

Dr. Olweus says that, contrary to popular belief, victims are not singled out because of some peculiarity, an "external deviation" such as red hair, obesity or wearing glasses. These, he believes, are only excuses — a pretext for the attentions of the bully.

"It does not require much imagination to understand what it is to go through the school years in a state of more or less permanent anxiety and insecurity and with low self-esteem," Dr. Olweus said.

He also made some observations on the sex differences in victims and bullies. "When comparing sex differences, we found that boys were somewhat more exposed to bullying than girls. This tendency was particularly marked in

the junior high school grades," Dr. Olweus said.

"These results concern what was called direct bullying," he continued, "with relatively open attacks on the victim. When we look at indirect bullying in the form of social isolation and exclusion from the group, there were very small differences between boys and girls."

Dr. Olweus discovered that boys carried out a large part of the bullying to which girls were subjected. "More than 60 percent of bullied girls (in certain grades) reported being bullied mainly by boys," he said. "An additional 15 to 25 percent said that they were bullied by both boys and girls. The great majority of boys on the other hand — more than 80 percent — were bullied chiefly by boys."

Direct physical attacks are three to four times more numerous from boys than girls, Dr. Olweus noted, but he added that girls can demonstrate great cruelty in subtler forms of harassment. Even in cases where no physical blows are struck, a blow to one's self-esteem in the developing years can be a terrible thing.[25]

Girls generally are less physically threatening in their bullying, observed Graham Herbert, who helped institute an anti-bullying curriculum as an administrator and teacher at a high school in Huddersfield, England. "A victim would be isolated by a group of erstwhile friends and acquaintances. The girls would have a pact not to speak to one of their number, or sit next to her in lessons, as though she were unclean or smelled," he explained.

"The bullies would ridicule just the things of which young girls are acutely conscious: their developing figures, their clothes, their general appearance, their attempts at makeup," Herbert noted. "In such cases, the problem is not the fear of physical violence but the constant condemnation, isolation and loneliness."

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Being socially ostracized and ridiculed by their peers can be devastating for children. Dr. Kaoru Yamamoto, a psychologist at the University of Colorado in Denver, was quoted in *Reader's Digest* recently as saying, "All too often we don't see or hear what is really troubling our children."

The psychologist said his surveys revealed that humiliation is a child's worst fear. Children are more afraid of being laughed at or being thought of as "different" than they are of going to the dentist, Dr. Yamamoto pointed out. They are afraid of "losing face," of being thought of as unattractive, stupid or dishonest. Children dread being teased or made fun of, Dr. Yamamoto added.[27]

The child who is bullied often will hide his or her predicament out of shame, one observer noted. The victim will mention the problem to parents only obliquely, fearing that he or she may be regarded as a coward, a failure

or somehow at least partially to blame. In this way, the behavior of bullying victims has been said to parallel that of rape victims, who believe they somehow must be at fault for being attacked.

Typically, bullies target kids who complain, seek attention, and seem emotionally needy and physically weak, Dr. Floyd noted. "Bullies love to say that such kids are really 'asking for it,'" he pointed out. "Victims seem to signal to others that they are insecure and worthless individuals who will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted."[28]

This passive behavior, research indicates, may be caused by parents who are overprotective of their children. Such parents encourage obedience and dependence rather than assertiveness and autonomy. "The message these parents give their kids is, 'Just do as I say and don't think for yourself,'" said Dr. Susan G. Forman, a school psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of South Carolina. It's easy to see how these kids might have a hard time withstanding a bully's attack. Some victims, rather than growing up in overprotective families, are abused at home and just seem to have given up, Dr. Forman observed.[29]

Studies, including the milestone federal report *Violent Schools — Safe Schools*, found that victims frequently end up in trouble at school because of truancy or poor grades. Sometimes, by acting on their fears and defending themselves, the victims become the offenders. The study showed that almost one-third of the victims of physical attacks said they occasionally bring a weapon to school; only 9 percent of other students did so.[30]

News reports cited in Chapter 1 tell about victim suicides and violent retaliations. But victims more commonly react by adopting basically the same attitude taken by the bully: that life is indeed hostile and the world is an unfriendly place.

Studies show that victims of bullying suffer self-deprecation, guilt, shame, learned helplessness and depression. Meanwhile, cynicism develops among victims who believe those in authority let the problem persist by disregarding or completely ignoring it. The victim's whole concept of a world of law and order where wrongs will be stopped suffers from this cynical attitude.

Others also are victims.

"Victim effects are experienced not only in those directly targeted for harassment, but also those who witness acts of victimization and fear the spread of the attack to themselves," Dr. Floyd warned. "These persons can be referred to as surrogate victims," he said. "They see something happen to a classmate and tell themselves, 'That could happen to me!'"

Dr. Floyd continued, "Vicarious victims include bystanders, witnesses and others who perceive their own vulnerability, fear the same fear as the victim, dread the victim's dread, but who frequently silence the impulse to speak out in support.

"These surrogate victims may sympathize with the actual victims but at the same time remain wary of a contagion effect and ward off a desire to go to

the victim's aid. Thus, not only is the victim scorned, humiliated or attacked by the bully, but he also often is rejected by others as a sort of pariah, one damaged, tainted, infected. The stigma of being victimized casts a long shadow and leaves a dark pall."[31]

Even if only one in seven pupils is involved in bully-victim incidents, each incident has a wider effect on all who witness it or know about it. In the average school, that usually includes everybody.

"Felonious aggressive behavior is a widespread contemporary scourge in schools," Dr. Floyd said.[32]

And it's not just inner-city schools that are involved. Dr. Olweus, among others, found that bullying problems are just as prevalent in one-room country schoolhouses as in large urban areas. The social or economic makeup of the students, class size and age also don't appear to make much difference.[33]

Of course, from school to school and from area to area, many different factors come into play.

Gangs, which children join in the belief that they offer a form of protection, are one of these factors. Racial factors also exist. Some youths are dopers, while others are not. Conflicts arise between "outsiders" and locals at various schools. Multicultural relations breed conflicts as well. On a lesser, almost prosaic level are the timeless clashes between cliques of the wealthy and the poor, the jocks and the brains, or even the pretty and the not-so-popular students.

"These surrogate victims may sympathize with the actual victims but at the same time remain wary of a contagion effect and ward off a desire to go to the victim's aid. Thus, not only is the victim scorned, humiliated or attacked by the bully, but he also often is rejected by others as a sort of pariah, one damaged, tainted, infected. The stigma of being victimized casts a long shadow and leaves a dark pall."

In a *School Safety* article titled "Understanding the Antisocial Adolescent," Dr. Stanton E. Samenow, a clinical psychologist and author, generalized the portrait of a bully: "Antisocial children harness their considerable energy and acumen to size up others by determining their weaknesses and then preying upon any vulnerability. They terrorize fellow classmates, destroy property, intimidate teachers, and, in sufficient numbers, turn schools into jungles. Like the mothers and fathers of these youngsters, school personnel often blame themselves. They think they must be at fault for failing to reach this youngster and engage him in constructive endeavors."

Many reasons have been given for this destructive behavior, Dr. Samenow noted. "Antisocial boys and girls tell us that 'peer pressure' led them astray. Their parents claim that their offspring were corrupted by others," he explained. "Children do want to be accepted by their peers. The question is, to which group does a child *choose* to belong? Youngsters choose the company they keep. The antisocial child gravitates to those who are doing what he con-

siders adventurous and exciting. He has contempt for the 'goody-goody' who lives within the limits of the responsible world."

In contrast to some other psychologists, Dr. Samenow maintains, "It is not the environment per se that is critical, but how people *choose* to respond to that environment." He urged, "We must help antisocial children develop a brand new way of thinking that includes teaching them a concept of injury to others."[34]

The ravages of school violence can cast a fearful shadow. Voicing a warning, Dr. Ken Magid and Carole A. McKelvey, authors of the book *High Risk: Children Without A Conscience*, said: "Unwanted, antisocial, abused children may become our most fearsome criminals in the future. Crime trends are revolving around an important issue: how one fails to develop a basic sense of right and wrong as a child."[35]

For decades, the rising tide of disruptive student behavior has increasingly eroded and undermined the whole process of educating the young. Drugs in school, gangs in school, weapons in school — the incidents have progressed to a boiling point where the eruption of violence is a foregone conclusion.

Much of the conflict stems from power plays in their own way — artificial or real armaments seized by children facing life situations that the participants feel justifies such behavior. Power implies struggle, the strong versus the weak, a conflict to dominate.

"One thing that is certain," asserts the *School Intervention Report*, "is that failure to acknowledge the problem is an invitation to disaster."[36]

Educators and behavior analysts have been searching for remedies as the phenomenon spreads year by year.

Finally, someone is doing something about it.

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Section II: The Solution

SET STRAIGHT ON BULLIES

Chapter 3

Educating the public

"Every individual should have the right to be spared oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation, in school as in society at large."

Those words, voiced by Dr. Dan Olweus, a professor at the University of Bergen in Norway, underscored the factual material shared by researchers and psychologists from throughout the United States and as far as Japan and Scandinavia who participated in the first-ever Schoolyard Bully Practicum at Harvard University in May 1987.

Bully-victim problems have broad implications for our country's fundamental democratic principles. Dr. Olweus voiced what might have been the theme for the Practicum: "No student should be afraid of going to school for fear of being harassed or degraded, and no parent should need to worry about such things happening to his or her child."

Parents, more than anything else, have voiced this concern for the safety of their children. In a survey published in the November 1987 issue of the *Middle School Journal*, parents were asked, "What would you like for the middle level school to provide for your child?"

The overwhelming response from parents was: "When my child goes to school, more than anything else, I want to know that he or she is safe." Education and progress fell sixth on the list of answers. All other parental concerns involved their children's "good experiences," developing friends, getting involved in activities and having some adult to turn to if support is needed.[1]

Aware of these parental priorities, the Practicum brought together a dozen specialists in a variety of fields concerned with the school violence problem. Working with these experts were the staff of the National School Safety Center, which sponsored the event, as well as school and law enforcement administrators and a private public relations counselor. Together they developed a plan for translating their collective research into actionable programs, activities and products to help intervene or prevent all aspects of bullying.

Many of the distinguished psychologists whose research is cited in this book participated in the Schoolyard Bully Practicum, including Dr. Olweus;

Dr. Leonard D. Eron of the University of Chicago at Illinois; Dr. David G. Perry of Florida Atlantic University; Dr. Nathaniel M. Floyd of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Southern Westchester, New York; and Dr. Robert Selman, Dr. Ronald Slaby and Dr. Gerald Lesser, professors at Harvard University. Dr. Lesser had just returned from a fact-finding research project in Japan.

The Practicum wasn't just talk.

Five major points were identified to address the scope of the bullying problem and plans for its relief through prevention and intervention tactics. The points are:

It must be recognized that schoolyard bullying is a significant and pervasive problem involving numerous schoolchildren. From his research, Dr. Olweus reiterated that roughly 40 percent of bullied students in the primary grades and almost 60 percent in junior high school reported that teachers tried to "put a stop to it" only once in a while or almost never. About 65 percent of all bullied students in elementary school said that their teachers had *not* talked with them about bullying. The corresponding figure for junior high school students was as high as 85 percent.

Fear has become a part of the everyday lives of victims. Bullying victims must adopt fugitive-like routines to avoid certain areas on campus — bathrooms, locker areas, hallways or other "unsafe turf" — where their adversaries hang out. Beyond this often-impossible avoidance of confrontation, some victims skip school, play sick or actually become ill under the pressure. In addition, victims suffer from emotional trauma that damages their image of self-worth and, in extreme cases, leads them to think of suicide as the only escape.

Fear and anxiety can victimize not only the targeted victim, but also other classmates and adults. Even in cases where individuals — or their teachers — are not singled out as targets for aggression, an atmosphere of lawlessness can be every bit as fear-provoking. If gangs, "dopers," and outsiders or individual bullies are allowed to menace the schoolyard and hallways, they create a climate of terror and dread that fills the school day and disturbs the peace that is vital to the educational process. Going to school can become like walking in "a bad area" after dark — no one wants to be there.

Apart from the victim, the bully himself also needs help. Research shows that when the behavior of bullies goes unchecked, they often continue on a lifelong destructive pattern. As adults, bullies are more likely to face problems with the law, with their work and with social relationships. Once bullies "learn" that their aggressive behavior can produce the results they desire, the method becomes a part of their total behavior and continues into adulthood unless intervention occurs. Bullies pose a problem in the schoolyard, but they also create problems for society throughout their lives.

"The lesson is," Dr. Floyd said during the Practicum, "we can't just intervene on behalf of the victims. We also have to save the bullies from themselves."

Some widely believed attitudes about bullies must be altered or abandoned. Part of the normal growing-up process does *not* include kids abusing kids or setting up their own hierarchy based on the strong victimizing the weak. In addition, the common belief that one sure remedy for bullying is for the victim to physically fight back must be exposed as a myth.

Evidence strongly suggests that the bullying intervention strategies adopted in foreign countries, most notably in Scandinavia and Japan, have promise in alleviating the situation if adopted in the United States. Chronicling the surge of interest in Scandinavia concerning the bullying problem, Dr. Olweus stated, "In late 1982, a newspaper reported that three 10- to 14-year-old boys from the northern part of Norway had committed suicide, in all probability as a consequence of severe bullying by peers.

"This event aroused a lot of public uneasiness and tension in the mass media and the general public. It triggered a chain of reactions, the end result of which was a nationwide campaign against bully-victim problems."

In Japan, where bullying is known as *ijime*, horror stories arose as well. In a case known but ignored by educators, a 14-year-old boy was forced to perform degrading acts such as eating grass. He also ended up a suicide victim and his case, along with others from around that country, provoked public action to confront the problem.

Increased public awareness about the problem and its ramifications in Scandinavia and Japan led the governments of these countries to promote full-scale campaigns designed to reduce bully-victim problems on a national level.

Some widely believed attitudes about bullies must be altered or abandoned. Part of the normal growing-up process does not include kids abusing kids or setting up their own hierarchy based on the strong victimizing the weak. In addition, the common belief that one sure remedy for bullying is for the victim to physically fight back must be exposed as a myth.

"Health education designed to change attitudes and behavior is fundamental to public health strategies," said Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health and author of *Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents*, which was published in 1987 in association with the Education Development Center, Inc. "Such strategies have been applied with varying degrees of success to the prevention of similar behaviorally related health problems," she explained.

"In an effort to reduce heart disease, health care institutions, job sites, schools, churches, community fairs and the media have contributed to public education and the awareness of exercise, smoking, cholesterol intake and blood pressure control," Dr. Prothrow-Stith said. "The model has been applied to unintentional injuries, yet its application to violence prevention offers a particular challenge because of the intentional nature of violence-related injuries."[2]

One example of such an approach to public re-education was seen in a unique new television advertising campaign in the Boston area. The ads, in recognition of the serious escalation of violence between students, warn: "When you tell a friend to fight, you might as well be killing him yourself."

It's a bold approach to a very serious challenge.

Taking on this challenge in helping design the bullying prevention campaign launched by NSSC was one special participant in the Schoolyard Bullying Practicum, Dr. Edward L. Bernays, regarded as the nation's premier public relations counsel.

Dr. Bernays described public relations as an engineering process — the engineering of public consent. The process involves setting a course of action based on thorough knowledge of a situation, then applying scientific principles and practices that persuade people to support ideas and programs.[3] Such a process should be applied to the school violence problem, he declared.

Because public attitudes and misperceptions about the bullying problem and its significance must be changed, and because any campaign today must compete with a hundred other "causes" that other promoters deem of equal or greater importance, Dr. Bernays said he felt that understanding public opinion was a key.

"Public opinion," he said, "is a term describing an ill-defined, mercurial and changeable group of individual judgments. Public opinion is the aggregate result of individual opinions."

Altering an individual's opinion can be a formidable challenge, he cautioned. "Persons who have little knowledge of a subject almost invariably form definite and positive judgments about that subject...not on the basis of research or logical deduction, but, for the most part, on dogmatic expressions accepted on the authority of parents, teachers, and church, social, economic and other leaders," Dr. Bernays pointed out.

He suggested strategies for NSSC and its resources to rally public support in a way that would make the people of this country eager to undertake a bullying prevention program. Dr. Bernays told Practicum participants, "Here is a cause that concerns not only every family with children, but also the entire population. For as a German proverb says, 'From children come people.'"

As a societal problem, the public — educators, parents, students and people in general — first must be enlightened about the bullying problem in order to deal with it. Dr. Bernays suggested that a national campaign similar to those in Japan and Scandinavia could be equally effective in tackling bullying in the United States.

One Practicum participant, Dr. Eron, voiced the feeling shared by a number of the other science-preoccupied psychologists, who often are reluctant to stray from their objective stance and adopt a "cause."

"Scientists do have a responsibility, even an obligation, to see that their findings are disseminated to the public without error," he began. However, Dr. Eron pointed out, "Scientists may or may not be good social advocates.

They may or may not be in a position to act on their findings or be sufficiently influential to persuade others to act on them."

He asked, "How much evidence must we have and how conclusive must this evidence be before we can act, before we can recommend certain interventions, before we can plead for policy directions — indeed, before we can step out of our role as pure scientists and become advocates for social change?"

Dr. Eron concluded, "In the present case regarding adolescent aggression, we will not be going beyond our science by speaking up. We have the data. The public is entitled to know the results of our research."[4]

As a first step in the bullying prevention campaign, NSSC brought the Practicum results to the attention of print and broadcast media nationwide. With the Practicum experts dispensing solidly backed information, public awareness quickly was aroused when exposed to this child-endangering problem.

A special segment of ABC News' "20/20" program dealing with bullying was aired on November 27, 1987. Network television and radio news and talk shows have discussed the issue as well. Newspapers from coast to coast picked up reports on the Practicum and its findings.

Many regional news outlets expanded on the Practicum report with localized stories for their readers. Conscious of reader concern over the problem, major newspapers, including the *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*, *Dallas Times Herald*, *San Francisco Examiner* and New York's *Newsday*, prepared their own feature stories with local case studies and interviews.

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Such extensive news coverage on a worthy topic has a way of snowballing and multiplying as it spreads in waves across the country. General-circulation periodicals were alerted to the bullying prevention case by articles in educational journals such as *Principal*, published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals; *Bulletin*, published by National Association of Secondary School Principals; *Education News*; *Education Digest*; and *pta today*.

This new round of interest bred stories in *Good Housekeeping*, *Psychology Today*, *Hippocrates*, *Parents*, *Sesame Street*, *Parenting* and *The Futurist*. Newsmagazines, including *U.S. News & World Report*, printed articles about the problem as well.

Schoolyard bullying and intimidation have been around for centuries. Al-

though the problem always has had serious physical and emotional implications for the victims, at the same time, it was generally dismissed by most uninvolved individuals.

Things are beginning to change, partly as a result of NSSC's Schoolyard Bully Practicum and the participants who directed their knowledge about the problem toward a program to help adjust public opinion.

Complementing this public awareness effort was a specific call to action, targeted directly at schools throughout the country: implement successful prevention and intervention strategies.

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Chapter 4

Prevention and intervention strategies

Perhaps the single most outstanding error concerning bullying is that the only way to deal with a bully and solve the problem is to beat him up.

While some situations make physical self-defense an inevitable action, overall aggression is not an appropriate civilized response to offensive behavior. Instructing a child to hit back is the basest attempt at conflict resolution and carries with it the notion that physical combat is an acceptable way to settle disputes.

Along with sending kids the message that they should hit back, adults too often simply shrug off childhood bullying. The widespread feeling among many adults is that kids will be kids, they'll always fight and they'll always get over it.

These misconceptions continue to be perpetuated, despite mounting psychological evidence to the contrary. Research shows that allowing bullying to go unchecked opens up a virtual Pandora's box of schoolday, adolescent and adult criminality.

Bullies have long been a popular topic, and the myths surrounding this phenomenon have been promoted first in folklore and today in feature movies where the villain-hero relationship is painted so distinctly. Apart from recognizing that bullying is a real problem, Hollywood's portrayal of bully-victim encounters almost always are unrealistic.

The requirements of drama call for a violent resolution of the conflict. Good conquers evil — and the conquering frequently is accomplished with a total vengeance that often pales in comparison to the wrongs the bully has committed. Adults never successfully intervene in such youthful conflicts, and, in fact, today's "youth films" tend to depict parents, teachers and school administrators either as non-existent, helpless or worse.

Whether kids receive the message from Hollywood or from real life, our society must stop advancing the false notion that the only way to fight violence is by using more violence. Telling a child to hit back gives the victim the distorted signal that it is his or her problem only, that no one cares

enough to help, and that parents and school staff absolve themselves of the difficulty. The victim must not be left standing alone with the burden of resolving the problem.

Even if a child does resolve his or her problem by hitting back, the bully most likely will just select a different target. But bullies don't always back down. An angered bully, once provoked by retaliation from a victim, may marshall the support of a gang of friends or older siblings to strike back with even greater force.

The conflict often escalates — and the consequences can be dangerous. At the least, confrontation may leave the victim suffering further physical harm and feelings of isolation and humiliation. This type of escalation knows no bounds and ultimately may include the use of weapons by both sides, possibly resulting in physical harm or even death.

Whether kids receive the message from Hollywood or from real life, our society must stop advancing the false notion that the only way to fight violence is by using more violence. Telling a child to hit back gives the victim the distorted signal that it is his or her problem only, that no one cares enough to help, and that parents and school staff absolve themselves of the difficulty. The victim must not be left standing alone with the burden of resolving the problem.

Better ways must be found for youths to cope with conflict. Beyond the obvious reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, today's schools must adopt an additional set of "three R's." These are:

- *Rules*: Parents and educators must demonstrate that they are in charge and won't tolerate any student hurting another student, either physically or psychologically.
- *Rights*: Every student has the right not to be hurt and the right to learn in a safe environment.
- *Responsibilities*: Educators must be responsible for better supervision and more observant monitoring of the schoolyard. By eliminating fear from the lives of students, the ability to teach is enhanced. Also, students must be responsible for respecting the rights of their classmates and themselves.

Specific actions can be taken by educators, parents and students themselves.

What educators can do

School personnel should take the following steps to help control and eliminate the problem of schoolyard bullying:

- Assess the awareness and scope of the problem through a questionnaire or other information-gathering process directed toward students, teachers and parents.
- Communicate clear and consistently enforced behavior standards. Rules

against bullying should be part of a larger set of rules regarding student discipline.

- Closely monitor playground activity and be visible around the campus. Victims routinely must avoid certain areas of the school, such as bathrooms, where bullies are more likely to have freer access to them. Check these areas regularly.
- Establish a comprehensive reporting system that records the details of bullying incidents, including names, locations, times and other circumstances.
- Provide students with opportunities to talk about the bullying phenomenon, and enlist their support in defining bullying as unacceptable. It should be established that every student has a basic right to be free of fear, oppression and intentional humiliation.
- Never overlook intentionally abusive acts. Bullies need to be confronted, but it should be done in private. By challenging a bully in front of his peers, it actually may enhance his status and lead to further aggression. In paying attention to the victim, be aware of and prepared to respond to more bullying that may be provoked when the student is outside the protection of the teacher.
- Notify the parents of both victims and bullies about the problem. Schools should help the parents of victims develop strategies for their child to make new acquaintances and promote healthy relationships. The parents of bullies should be urged to monitor their child's activities, to reinforce prosocial behaviors, and to consistently use non-physical punishments for antisocial behaviors.
- Establish intervention programs, which might include suspension from school, group or individual counseling, and the teaching of social skills.
- Encourage parent participation in school activities, including classroom visits, playground or hallway supervision, and regular teacher conferences.
- Provide support and, if necessary, protection for bullying victims. If school officials fail to help victims, it only encourages bullies to make further assaults and reinforces the concern of victims to keep silent.

Dr. Ronald Slaby, a psychologist at Harvard University, prepared the following list of steps that complements the above strategies and can be applied to students at all grade levels:

- Provide sufficient space so that children are not overcrowded, as well as to avoid pushing and shoving situations.
- Provide sufficient materials so that students do not have to compete for them.
- Eliminate toys and games that are suggestive of aggressive themes, such as comic strip superheroes.
- Don't allow an aggressor to benefit from aggressive acts.
- Pay attention to the victim, not the aggressor, when intervening in bully-victim situations. Step between them, ignoring the aggressor while tending to the victim. Attention only encourages the aggressor.

- Suggest to the victim assertive ways to handle the aggressor without escalating the confrontation.
- Encourage children to use verbal alternatives. Praise them for verbal alternatives and cooperative behavior.
- Demonstrate reasonable, cooperative, non-aggressive approaches to conflicts.
- Discuss and demonstrate alternative problem-solving methods at times when conflict is not occurring.
- Avoid physical punishment for aggression. Physical punishment, parents should be advised, legitimizes the use of force.
- Don't encourage children to redirect aggression toward inanimate objects. Evidence shows this only encourages aggression.
- To the extent that it can be controlled or advised, discourage the viewing of television violence. It's practically impossible to avoid in the home, but television violence should be qualified and put in proper perspective. Discuss alternatives to give negative sanction.[1]

By teaching young people to enhance their skills in social problem solving and to rethink their beliefs that support aggression, their behavior can be changed. Helping children learn more about resolving conflict situations, negotiation strategies, legal rights and responsibilities, and simple courtesy will go a long way toward reversing the tragic consequences of the bully-victim problem.

By teaching young people to enhance their skills in social problem solving and to rethink their beliefs that support aggression, their behavior can be changed. Helping children learn more about resolving conflict situations, negotiation strategies, legal rights and responsibilities, and simple courtesy will go a long way toward reversing the tragic consequences of the bully-victim problem.

Schools are assuming an increasing role in teaching students social skills. "While the public has, for the most part, traditionally taken the position that the primary role of the schools is to teach children the three R's, teachers are increasingly assuming greater responsibility for teaching appropriate social and behavioral skills to their students," wrote Dr. Ellen McGinnis and Dr. Arnold P. Goldstein in their book *Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child: A Guide for Teaching Prosocial Skills.*

"Many educators are concluding that the time spent dealing with behavior problems can be better employed in teaching children how to prevent conflicts or deal with them in an effective, socially acceptable manner," said Dr. McGinnis and Dr. Goldstein. Their book is designed to provide teachers and others with a well-validated technique for sytematically teaching children the behaviors necessary for effective and satisfying social interactions. Dr. Goldstein also has written a volume titled *Skillstreaming the Adolescent.*

Dr. McGinnis and Dr. Goldstein, citing W.C. Morse's book *Teaching Excep-*

tional Children, wrote: "There are those who would admonish or exhort their pupils 'to behave' rather than teach them how to relate positively to each other. Seldom would we admonish a pupil to read in place of teaching the necessary skills." The authors concluded, "Thus, it is not enough merely to tell a student that an action is not acceptable; additional measures must be taken to *teach* the student *what to do*, as well as what not to do."[2]

Dr. Steven Brion-Meisels, a Cambridge educator who has adapted some of the techniques developed by Harvard psychologist Robert L. Selman for use by teachers in the classroom, said, "We would never expect a kid to learn to read or write just from hearing a lecture. And we shouldn't expect them to learn social skills that way either."[3]

Some children simply lack or are deficient in the basic skills needed to get along with others and function socially. "Children need to learn how to trust and love others before they can contribute positively to society," said Dr. Ken A. Magid and Carole A. McKelvey, authors of the book *High Risk: Children Without a Conscience*. "Teaching children to count isn't nearly as important as teaching children what counts. We cannot call it education unless it also teaches our children honesty, self-respect and respect for others," they added.[4]

Self-esteem is one of the most widely valued characteristics that educators and parents can help develop in children, and it's an ingredient that can help prevent many schoolyard conflicts from escalating into fights. Teaching children to defend themselves verbally, without provoking physical violence, is a better alternative than fighting. Children can be taught to walk away from a fight without feeling a "loss of face."

In his paper presented at the 96th annual convention of the American Psychological Association during the summer of 1988, Dr. John Lochman of Duke University Medical School described the results of a three-year follow-up study to a cognitive-behavioral intervention program for aggressive boys. Unexpected, wider-reaching benefits were discovered from the program.

"These results indicate that a school-based Anger Coping program for aggressive elementary school boys can serve as a secondary prevention for later marijuana, drug and alcohol involvement three years later when the boys are in junior high school," Dr. Lochman reported.

"These results are among the first to suggest that by focusing on the earlier risk factor, childhood aggression and its mediating process, secondary prevention of later alcohol and drug difficulties can occur," he noted. "It may be that the problem-solving training during the Anger Coping program prepared these treated aggressive boys to make more careful, less impulsive decisions."[5]

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dren to defend themselves verbally, without provoking physical violence, is a better alternative than fighting. Children can be taught to walk away from a fight without feeling a "loss of face."

Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health and a specialist in teen-age violence prevention, has designed a pilot program in the Boston area. The purpose of the course is to give students the facts about violence and its consequences and to change their attitudes about violent behavior.

Specifically, the curriculum is designed to:

- Increase student knowledge about the causes and effects of violence.
- Enable students to identify violence-producing situations and to avoid becoming entangled in fights and other violent episodes.
- Help students to understand their own anger and to channel it in non-violent, constructive ways.
- Encourage students to consider alternatives to violence in conflict situations.[6]

Educators are beginning to realize that we must teach youngsters more than simply reading, writing and mathematics — they need to be equipped with survival skills. The Michigan State Department of Education is piloting a special program that focuses upon prosocial skills for its students. Special training segments are on classroom survival skills, making friends, dealing with stress, making decisions and understanding consequences.

Situations will differ from one school to another, and educators must recognize that the same answers will not always fit every circumstance.

A few years ago at Boston's English High School, a specific problem occurred with black students intimidating Haitian immigrants. A special program, which included special instruction, was drafted and put into effect to deal with the situation. Difficult bullies, for example, were placed in counseling with Harvard University doctoral candidates in psychology.[7]

While many different school districts around the nation are testing ways to deal with the problem of aggressive youths, it should be acknowledged that the modification of antisocial behavior in young males is a rather new and rapidly expanding field. Many new techniques are being tested and the results — lacking sufficient timespan — have yet to be fully examined.

Dr. Slaby commented, "Whereas the use of reasoning can be effective in reducing aggression, it is important that the adult use this technique only at 'neutral' times. Reasoning with a child who has just committed an aggressive act only serves to reinforce aggression by providing adult attention."

Some otherwise normal children become bullies when they see coercion pay off, the psychologist pointed out. He added that boys show higher levels of both verbal and physical aggression because adults may tolerate or even encourage such behavior as part of the traditional masculine image.[8]

Based on his studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, psychologist Leonard D. Eron takes a similar view, suggesting that boys should be social-

ized more like girls.

"Girls always have been told that aggressive behavior is not ladylike. They have been discouraged from doing it. Boys, however, are encouraged to be aggressive," he said. Dr. Eron said he believes boys should be taught to be more empathetic, understanding and compassionate — values that more often are exhibited in females. That would certainly help reduce aggressive behavior, he pointed out, as well as the acceptance of it. "Such instruction does not interfere with masculinity," he added.[9]

Experts believe that, although many of a child's attitudes come to school with him from his family, attempts must be made to modify this behavior as soon as a problem can be identified.

New intervention programs typically do not focus on the marks of personality left by family life, an approach followed by family and child therapists. Instead, they try to use the classroom to teach bullies more peaceful methods of achieving their goals without alienating others.

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At Duke University, Dr. Lochman operates a program involving small groups of four or five children who have been identified by teachers as over-aggressive or victim-prone.

"We tell the boys that this is a group which will teach them how to better handle situations that get them frustrated and angry," Dr. Lochman said. "We try to give them new ways to respond. Instead of getting angry, for instance, they can try out coming back at a kid in a playful way."

Role-playing is another technique employed. Children are given a chance to practice common situations, such as starting a conversation with a schoolmate one does not know or responding to teasing situations.[10]

In another program, conducted by Dr. Karen Bierman at Pennsylvania State University, bullies are placed in "friendship groups" with other children to teach them cooperation.

Dr. Bierman said, "We teach them that when you disagree, you should make clear what's bothering you, then try to make a deal with the other kid that will leave both of you happy. If they disagree about going first, they can make a deal: this week I go first, next week you do. The bullies learn that if they hit hard enough, they always go first — but it leaves them with no friends."[11]

Many different types of special classes are being inaugurated as pilot programs or on a research basis in different parts of the country, all aimed at in-

tervention and, in effect, the re-education of flawed personalities.

"There are three roads to conflict resolution — fight/litigate, negotiating/bargain and design a way out. Only the first two are available to the disputants," according to the book *Conflicts — A Better Way to Resolve Them* by Dr. Edward de Bono, founder and director of the Cognitive Research Trust in Cambridge, England.

"Unfortunately, the parties involved in a dispute happen to be in the worst possible position to settle that dispute.... There is one — and only one — situation in which the parties in a conflict are in the best position to solve it: the situation where resolution of the conflict is going to be through the exercise of sheer force," Dr. de Bono wrote.[12]

Many educators and psychologists believe that the grade school level is the place to start teaching children positive ways to resolve conflicts. The Children's Interpersonal Negotiations Project, for example, conducted by Dr. Selman and his associate at Harvard, Michelle Glidden, is a school-based program requiring eight to 10 weekly hour-long sessions with an adult trainer. Children are paired with those of contrasting personalities — an aggressive child is paired with a non-aggressive youngster.

A typical session consists of:

- Showing a filmstrip of a "hypothetical" interpersonal dilemma.
- Discussion by the pair about the filmstrip to generate alternative solutions and ultimately choose the "best" solution.
- A free-play period with an activity chosen together by the pair.
- An end-of-the-session period of discussion on any "real-life" problem that occurred during the play period.

During the free-play period, with the help of the adult trainer, the children learn how to verbally negotiate solutions when conflicts arise rather than resolving their differences through physical might. "The specific 10-week training for pairs of children can be done by school counselors or other interested school staff," Dr. Selman said.[13]

Effective intervention in fights and assaults on school campuses is the responsibility of Peter Blauvelt, director of Security Services for the Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland. Blauvelt, in *Effective Strategies for School Security*, says that more teachers and administrators are injured while breaking up fights and assaults than during any other type of activity. This occurs because the person breaking up the altercation makes several critical mistakes.

"First, the adult runs up to the fight and immediately jumps into the middle of the fracas and starts pulling the combatants apart," Blauvelt pointed out. "This action offers the kids a free shot at the adult. After all, in the heat of the fight, how could they possibly know that it was a teacher pulling them apart? They thought it was some other student!"

The second critical mistake adults make is that they do not take the time to

analyze the fight, Blauvelt noted. "By jumping right into the middle of the dispute," he said, "the adult does not know if one or both of the fighters has a weapon; if the altercation is a staged event — staged for the benefit of the teacher or administrator; if the fight is in the winding-down stage, meaning both kids are pooped; or who the aggressor is. You want to know who has or is getting the better blows in because that is the person you must watch."

The recommended procedure for breaking up altercations involves the following steps:

- Promptly *walk*, don't run, to the fight so you may visually analyze the situation and mentally form a strategy as you approach.
- The moment you come in sight of the altercation, use your best cafeteria voice and let the world know you are coming and you want this nonsense stopped immediately.
- If possible, while *walking* to the fight, stop at various classrooms and obtain help from other teachers; make sure someone is sent to the office for additional help.
- Call out to any of the students you recognize and start giving orders: Mary, go to Mr. Frank's room; Sam, you go to the office and get Mr. Jones; Calvin, go to your locker and get me your science book. It does not matter what you tell the kids to do. Just remember, kids are accustomed to responding to directions, so give them directions. You want them away from the commotion.
- If you know the fighters by name, call out each of their names and let them know you know who they are. This may be the time for a little humor. If you can get some of the kids laughing, it will ease the tension.
- If you are confronted with a real donnybrook of a fight, get additional help. Don't try to be a hero.[14]

Teachers — often reluctantly — have to deal with physically grown versions of the bully, some of whom may be armed. As bullies grow bigger and bigger, they threaten not only their classmates, but also teachers and other school employees. Recent national trends and the concerns of top school administrators reflect growing distress over the increase of weapons on campuses and their use in assaults against both students and staff.

While adults often ignore the predicament of young children being bullied, they may be forced to cope with older bullies.

Dealing with the violent student is a specialty of Peter Commanday, coordinator of professional training in New York City's Office of School Safety. He offers workshops on this topic for teachers, security guards and others. Commanday claims to have personally disarmed more than 400 students during 25 years as a teacher and dean in South Bronx schools — which are among the nation's toughest — while seldom having to resort to physical means.

His advice is to stay cool under verbal abuse and let the student do the talking. The ability to listen to a student's complaints is paramount,

Commanday maintains.

As an example, he told of a case where he was called in to deal with a teen-age girl who physically assaulted a male teacher. It wasn't the first time. He greeted her in a friendly manner and said, "Tell me everything. I promise to listen and I won't interrupt."

She began by saying why she hated this teacher and that teacher. She ran on and on, and he let her have her say.

"I was silent," Commanday said. "I waited for her to finish, then I said, 'Anything else?' It was only then, after I had listened through all the rest, that she blurted out, 'Can you stop my stepfather from raping me twice a week?' " Commanday's tactics for dealing with aggressive students are well thought out. Some of his suggestions include:

- Never approach a disruptive student directly because this might trigger a confrontation. Approach on a diagonal course.
- Never point at the student.
- Don't "jail" a child with his back to the wall. That's done when you talk to someone of a lesser rank. Put your back against the wall, too. Then you can talk equal to equal, friend to friend.
- Remember that no one can go from the boiling point to cooling instantly. Aim to change the tone of crisis gradually.[15]

Being visible on campus does help prevent most student aggression. Many school leaders who have succeeded in bringing an atmosphere of peace to school campuses where such peace did not exist before credit their high profile and routine interaction with students.

Being visible on campus does help prevent most student aggression. Many school leaders who have succeeded in bringing an atmosphere of peace to school campuses where such peace did not exist before credit their high profile and routine interaction with students.

Students should know that their principal or other school personnel will be likely to pop in any door or appear in any corridor or corner of the school grounds. If they know that school personnel are highly visible on campus, it has the same deterrent effect as does a highway patrol black-and-white vehicle on speeders.

"Simply banishing misconduct does not ensure a well-disciplined student body or an environment conducive to learning," according the U.S. Department of Education publication *Research in Brief*. "The final goal of discipline, after all, is to foster greater learning, as well as greater virtue, stronger character, and, in time, self-discipline."

The June 1988 article on "Improving Student Discipline" stressed the role of leadership in bringing about the goals of less-disruptive, highly motivated students, calling it a "crucial ingredient in improving discipline." The report stated, "Students respond best to a principal they can respect.... These men

and women are firm, fair, consistent and highly visible."[16]

This brings up a key point in the prevention and treatment of bullying that can have a broad effect. Schools need to establish and communicate a clearly spelled out set of rules for campus behavior, and to enforce them consistently, without variation. We tend to get not only what we expect, what we deserve and what we measure, but also, perhaps most importantly, what we "put up with." The three F's of good school administration include being firm, friendly and fair — in that order. Students will respect that approach and the results will go a long way toward maintaining a positive campus environment.

"It is important to create a school environment with firm limits to unacceptable behavior," psychologist Dan Olweus of the University of Bergen in Norway maintains. "In case of violations of limits and rules, non-hostile, non-physical sanctions should consistently be applied. Implied in this also is a certain degree of monitoring or surveillance of the students' activities in and out of school. Adults are supposed to act as authorities, at least in some respects."[17]

Dr. Nathaniel M. Floyd, a psychologist for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Southern Westchester, New York, also stressed the need for a student code of conduct. "Chronic disruptions in schools, including episodes of victimization, can produce cynicism toward those in authority who are perceived as unable or unwilling to exercise control over the students," he said.

"As adults, we do not have to — and probably can't — live up to the expectations of teen-agers," Dr. Floyd continued. "However, children entrusted to our care at the very least are entitled to schools led and instructed by legitimate authorities who can ensure order and security."

He emphasized that "bullies need to believe that teachers are in control and that adults believe in the rules they make."[18]

Rules can make all the difference in the total atmosphere at school — the difference between law and order for all or a reign of terror.

According to a 1987 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 44 percent of teachers said they saw more disruptive behavior in their schools now than five years ago. More than half of the teachers — 54 percent — thought that student misconduct interfered with learning "to a moderate or great extent."

The study also showed that instructors can reduce this disruptive behavior and increase scholastic success by setting and enforcing clear rules at the beginning of the year, consistently rewarding good behavior, and promptly punishing misconduct. Within this framework, rewards and punishments should be incremental and designed for speedy application. Punishments must deprive students of things they want, rewards must be attractive, and both should be acceptable to the community.

More open and widespread participation generally is related to fewer disruptive behaviors and greater feelings of responsibility among teachers and students.

The most favorable situation to bring about is one in which students feel

that the school serves their needs, is a safe and happy place to be, treats them as valued individuals, and provides ways in which student concerns are treated fairly. "When students feel supported and are involved in the life of the school," according to the teachers surveyed, "fewer disruptions or irresponsible behaviors will occur."

The appearance and comfort of the school itself significantly contributes to the atmosphere. The U.S. Department of Education survey concluded: "Generally, environments that are pleasant for adults and students to work in, and ones that reflect the interests, culture and values of students, encourage good behavior. The more the school environment looks like a workshop, a library, a restaurant or a conference center and less like a prison or institution, the fewer the problems."[19]

To achieve such a positive atmosphere, researchers agree, principals and teachers must present a "united front" on both discipline and achievement matters. With contributions from students, a school disciplinary code should be developed and then enforced firmly, fairly and consistently.

To achieve such a positive atmosphere, researchers agree, principals and teachers must present a "united front" on both discipline and achievement matters. With contributions from students, a school disciplinary code should be developed and then enforced firmly, fairly and consistently.

A typical set of rules should include, in addition to the customary regulations governing traffic, locker regulations and rights, and class attendance, the following points:

- Striking another person may be considered a criminal act and may be dealt with as such.
- Every student has a right to be secure and safe from threats and harassment. This school follows the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees individuals such rights.
- Anyone bringing weapons onto school grounds will be considered armed and dangerous and the police will be called.
- Crimes against property and any other violations of the law will be treated as such.

A copy of the school discipline plan should be sent to all parents at the beginning of the school year.

Discipline has many nuances. It has been defined as "training that is expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement." One group of educators has described discipline as "ordered behavior that leads to better learning."[20]

Within this context, discipline is not something that simply does or does not exist in a school. It is the means by which students are nurtured to learn, to develop responsibility and, ultimately, to control their own actions. Discipline is a social necessity; it is the essence of learning.

High expectations, respect, trust and positive reinforcement of correct behavior are found consistently in schools demonstrating good discipline. When this climate exists and students are engaged in productive and satisfying classroom work, discipline problems are diminished significantly. If, on the other hand, the atmosphere is one of hostility and insensitivity and students are continually subjected to criticism and failure, serious disciplinary problems and criminal behaviors are likely to erupt.

Even in the best environments, some misbehavior will occur that requires the enforcement of established codes of conduct. School conduct codes must clearly define unacceptable behavior and distinguish between rule infractions, which require an internal or administrative school response, and criminal acts, which warrant law enforcement and/or criminal justice intervention.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1975 in the case of *Goss v. Lopez* that students are entitled to certain due process rights when accused of any misbehavior that could result in the loss of 10 or more days of school.[21] Uniform, districtwide discipline systems that take this into consideration are the most practical and effective.

However, remember that whatever rules are established, some students will challenge the rules and some will refuse to obey.

Dr. Stanton E. Samenow, a clinical psychologist and author of *Inside the Criminal Mind*, advises teachers: "Some boys and girls are anti-work from the time they enter school and refuse to do nearly anything that they consider difficult or dull. They use the classroom as an arena for seeking excitement by extorting lunch money from fellow pupils, destroying property and abusing teachers."

Of the bully in particular, Dr. Samenow writes, "The person who relishes being the tough guy is, in reality, a frightened person, although he rarely admits it. He knows right from wrong and, contrary to what most people think, he does consider the consequences of his action. But he's able to do something with his fear of consequences that is unusual to most people — he shuts it off long enough to pursue his single-minded objective of the moment."

The psychologist is speaking of the criminal mind, but it operates in the development stage in schools as well as on the streets — and frighteningly so.

"The criminal's strongest fear is that of being put down," Dr. Samenow pointed out. "Anything that is not in line with his expectations of himself and the world is perceived as diminishing him. The daily frustrations we all cope with seem cataclysmic to him. If an antisocial youth walks down the hall and looks at another the wrong way, a fight may erupt," he explained.

"The antisocial youth is intolerant of any slight to his self-concept," Dr. Samenow said. "This has profound implications for anyone who deals with him. A teacher can sharply reprimand one child and have him respond cooperatively. But if the teacher speaks in a similar manner to the antisocial child, he may have a fight on his hands."[22]

Teachers may argue that their task is educating the willing, not dealing with

the criminal mind. Although some teachers deal with it while others ignore it, experts point out that the schools may be the best place for confronting and correcting behavior problems that otherwise are destined to be unleashed on society at large.

A recent Gallup Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, published in the June 1989 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, reported that although parents and teachers disagree a great deal on the goals of education, nearly half of the teachers and almost two-thirds of the parents surveyed believe that schools should teach students moral standards.[23]

In *Today's Delinquent*, Dr. Gary D. Gottfredson, a research scientist at the Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, declared, "The family is the most important institution in the socialization of children but, for those children who are most at risk of adolescent problem behavior, the schools seem in a better position to implement effective interventions than are families."

Teachers may argue that their task is educating the willing, not dealing with the criminal mind. Although some teachers deal with it while others ignore it, experts point out that the schools may be the best place for confronting and correcting behavior problems that otherwise are destined to be unleashed on society at large.

Elsewhere in the 1987 publication, issued by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, Dr. Gottfredson argued, "The main argument that shines through it is the school offers more promise for delinquency prevention than the family, the peer group or the juvenile justice system."[24]

According to a report titled *Success Insurance for Youth* prepared by the Youth Enhancement Association, "Home, school and peers act as the triad upon which most research findings on misbehavior have focused." Evidence seems to suggest that when children have a supportive climate and good relationships at school, it can compensate for a poor home environment, the 1988 report stated.

In addition to forming a strong attachment with their parents, bonding with their teachers can be an important factor in a child's development, the Youth Enhancement Association publication emphasized. "Students who responded that they did not care what their teachers thought of them were three times more likely to be seriously delinquent as were students who cared what teachers thought of them," according to the report.[25]

The family, and parent participation in solving the problem, is important. But too often, as teachers well know, their job is to try to undo the teachings — conscious or not — that a child gets at home.

In a 1989 Gallup Poll, teachers said they think the biggest problem facing public schools is parental lack of interest and support. More than one-third of the teachers surveyed named this as the most critical problem for schools to-

day, with some teachers saying that they have "no backing from parents on discipline" and others charging that "parents don't help students realize the importance of preparing for the future."[26]

Responsible parents can play an important role in dealing with the problem of school crimes against children, especially their own children. Every family in itself is a system of teaching and learning, and parents should familiarize themselves with many of the prevention and intervention strategies used by teachers, as well as with other strategies they can initiate at home.

What parents can do

For instance, the advice to a victim to strike back at his aggressor often comes from home. But this approach causes more problems than it solves. What can parents do to help ensure the safety of their children at school?

These suggestions can help parents detect and deal with bullying:

- *Watch for symptoms.* Victims may be withdrawn, experience a drop in grades, show a loss of appetite, be hesitant to go to school, or come home with torn clothes or unexplained bruises. Be suspicious if your child needs extra school supplies or often needs extra lunch money; a bully may be extorting things your child "loses."
- *Talk, but listen too.* Communicate openly, but don't pry. Encourage your child to share information about school, social activities, and the walk or ride to and from school.
- *Inform school officials immediately.* Keep a written record of the times, dates, names, and circumstances of any and all bullying incidents. This will enable you to show school officials that a pattern may be developing.
- *Don't bully your child yourself.* Take a look at your family's discipline measures. Try to teach your child to obey rules by using consistently enforced but non-physical forms of discipline.
- *If you have not received a copy of your child's school rules of conduct, ask for one — insist on one.*
- *Teach your child to be assertive, but* not *aggressive.* Don't simply tell your child to "fight back" against bullies or "just ignore them and they'll go away." The inclination often is to hit back when threatened, but that actually may cause more harm. Teach children to stand up for themselves verbally. Inquire about programs that will boost self-esteem. Encourage children to make friends, to socialize and to communicate with others.
- *Invest quality time with your child.* It is all too easy to drop our children off at school in the first grade, then pick them up 12 years later and wonder what went wrong in between. Kids require time and attention, and they tend to reflect the care and thoughtfulness shown to them. A goal of good parenting should be to help youngsters find success.

Dr. Kenneth A. Dodge, a psychologist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, advises parents to tell their child — in no uncertain terms — that

aggressive behavior is not permissible and will not be tolerated. He says that parents should use timeout (isolation from the social environment) or some other non-hostile form of punishment to let the child know they are serious.[27]

"Our observation studies," said Dr. Gerald R. Patterson and his colleagues at the Oregon School of Learning Center in Eugene, "suggest that aggressive boys are likely to come from families in which all members demonstrate high rates of aggressive behaviors." He noted that aggressive children "tend to receive three times as much punishment from their social environment as do non-problem children."

In contrast to the parents of non-problem children, Dr. Patterson says that "matters are likely to get worse" when the parents of aggressive children use punishments such as scolding, nagging, threatening or spanking. "When they punish the child, he is even more likely to immediately repeat the behavior," he said. Dr. Patterson suggests that instead of threatening the aggressive child, parents should use other kinds of punishment, "primarily withdrawal of reinforcers such as a loss of points, a loss of TV privileges or timeout."[28]

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The importance of listening to children also was emphasized by Dr. Kaoru Yamamoto of the University of Colorado at Denver. "By being attentive to what the young have to say, and how they say it, grown-ups can convey their respect and acceptance," he said.

"In listening to children, it is difficult not to be touched by the profound sense of vulnerability in them," Dr. Yamamoto said, stressing that young children in particular are dependent upon adults to aid them in understanding and coping with the struggles they face in life. "Too often they must persevere and persist alone in the face of the unknown and overwhelming," he added.

"Adult assistance, first of all, must be geared to those struggles that can easily escape attention unless observed with care," he pointed out. Dr. Yamamoto said he agrees with other researchers that "the parents of good copers neither indulged their children nor overprotected them. They respected their children's capacities, encouraged and rewarded their efforts, and offered reassurance in times of frustration and failure."[29]

One area that should not escape parental attention is closely monitoring the television shows and videotape cassettes children watch. Although television and film violence are so prevalent that their availability borders on the una-

voidable, parents can and should discuss these fictional and factual programs with their children. Violence is prominently featured even on news reports. Parents should explain to their children that in real life, aggression does not pay in the end and is socially and morally undesirable.

"Because of the prevalence of, and massive exposure to, televised violence, much of the research on disinhibition of aggression has grown out of interest in the effects of symbolic modeling," Dr. Albert Bandura said in his book *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*.[30]

Dr. Eron also condemned "the extent to which the child is exposed to prominent examples of persons who obtain attractive goals and gain adulation from their peers through the use of physical force and other coercive techniques."[31]

Both Dr. Eron and Dr. David G. Perry, a psychologist at Florida Atlantic University, give television violence some of the blame for schoolyard violence. Dr. Perry pointed out that in television and movies, bullying victims often are portrayed as "different." But in real life, the victims look like any other youngsters, except that they usually are physically weaker.[32]

"Television violence teaches children to be aggressive, to solve interpersonal problems through physical violence," Dr. Eron said. He noted that the effect is especially strong in a child's early developing years. "They see that law enforcement officials, good guys, bad guys — everybody — uses violence. It becomes an accepted way of behaving," he said.[33]

Of course, television, like the extremes of life it usually tends to dramatize, is not the only modeling force influencing violent behavior. Educators justly complain that too often they are asked to deal with children whose problems originate in the home — problems not only associated with television, but which also are the result of poor or non-existent parenting.

Dr. Glenn Sparks of Purdue University in Indiana cited another disturbing facet of television violence: "Violent TV scenes frighten and upset children between the ages of 7 and 11. Children this age realize these scenes could really happen — and happen to them."[34]

Dr. Bandura stated, "Analyses of televised programs reveal that violent conduct is portrayed, for the most part, as permissible, successful and relatively clean." Results of laboratory and field studies, he said, "show that children and adults tend to behave more punitively if they have seen others act aggressively than if they had not been exposed to aggressive models."

People who watched violent dramatic presentations "are more likely to approve of such behavior or to join in the assaults rather than seek alternative solutions," Dr. Bandura noted.[35]

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originate in the home — problems not only associated with television, but which also are the result of poor or non-existent parenting.

Dr. Eron also urged that parents who are dissatisfied with the level of supervision at their local schools might volunteer or help organize a parents' patrol for the most dangerous school hours. The Chicago Intervention Network has orchestrated the formation of parent patrols to deal with incidents of bullying, intimidation and assaults against students going to and from school. Parent involvement in school activities can be the life or death of almost any program that attempts to solve the problems of their sons and daughters.

Dr. Daniel Linden Duke of the University of Virginia, in his book *Managing Student Behavior Problems*, said research shows that parental involvement can improve both student achievement and behavior. One of the studies they cited found "dramatic improvements in student achievement and behavior as a result of involving inner-city parents in their children's schooling."[36]

Dr. Gottfredson has reviewed some delinquency projects based on families and found some to be effective. However, he pointed out, family intervention seems to be most useful in the least disorganized families, makes heavy demands on parents, and its long-term efficacy has not been demonstrated.[37]

The situation is headed for further complexity, says Dorothy Rich, president of The Home and School Institute in Washington, D.C. She predicted, "School and family responsibilities are increasing and likely will continue to increase. Before 1990, there will be more young children in school with mothers in the workplace than ever before. To help more students succeed, families must have greater positive impact on children's schooling."

Rich observed, "The family may look different today, but parents continue to care about their children."[38]

In *Managing Student Behavior Problems*, Dr. Duke echoed the same belief, saying, "Most parents — even those with 'problem' children — care deeply about their offspring."

They warned, "On some occasions, parents neglect to become more involved in their children's education simply because they are unaware of the possibilities open to them. It is up to school personnel to inform parents of their options as well as to make them feel wanted when they come to discuss their children."

Dr. Duke advises schools to promote positive discipline and other parenting skills by conducting parent education programs. "The school should provide opportunities for parents to gain new skills and knowledge related to child-rearing and behavior problems," he contends. "Informal gatherings devoted to the open discussion of childrearing problems can provide parents with the much-needed group support they have failed to receive because of their reluctance to share their problems."[39]

If parents have their own problems in the areas of aggressiveness and self-esteem, they are not well-equipped to pass on the basics for social adjustment to their children, psychologists note. Parents also should seek counseling

themselves so they can effectively deal with traits they may pass on to their children. Bullying is a generational problem, and avoiding perpetuation by not setting bad examples is a key prevention strategy.

What students can do

Student reaction to conflict — even if only as a witness — can be critical in cases of bullying.

"It is the spectators who urge on the gladiators," Dr. de Bono wrote in his book on conflicts. "It is the football crowds that energize the players."

He says, "On the whole...it is the nature of society to encourage and spur on conflict right up to the point at which it becomes personally inconvenient. By then it can be too late to switch it off."

Later in his book, Dr. de Bono referred to the expected heroics of "defending the motherland against aggressors or coming to the aid of the victims of a bully."[40] Whatever happened to the revered tradition of rooting for the underdog?

A student's reaction to instances of bullying, either as a supporter or spectator can signal the whole atmosphere of a schoolyard and what the "silent majority" of students feel with regard to tolerating such situations.

Relating an example, Ira Sachnoff, president of the National Peer Helpers Association, described an all-too-familiar scenario:

> *A conflict had arisen between two boys and was to be resolved after school with a fight. Other students heard about the impending fight and gathered to watch and shout encouragement.*
>
> *The episode ended tragically. One of the boys was killed when he fell and struck his head on the ground; the other boy will have to live with the tragedy for the rest of his life.*
>
> *After reading the story, I couldn't help but ask myself, "What if?" What if a responsible student had heard about the fight and told an appropriate adult? What if the boys had gotten the message from peers that violence was not an acceptable way of resolving differences. What if the school had trained conflict managers available to mediate in such situations?*[41]

Today, many students are turning to their peers to resolve such potentially tragic conflicts. Peer counseling groups are located in schools throughout the United States and go by a variety of names. Robert Bowman, editor of *Peer Facilitator Quarterly*, estimates that about 20,000 peer counseling programs exist in schools nationwide.[42] All share the common goal of using students themselves — often in a panel — to help solve their problems that otherwise would land in the hands of the law or other authority.

Peer mediation programs such as the San Francisco-based Conflict Resolution Resources "Conflict Manager" program use students to resolve peer conflicts. Student Conflict Managers receive 16 hours of training, which emphasizes active listening, teamwork (student mediators work in pairs), and learn-

ing the steps of the mediation process.

At the elementary level, mediators wear brightly colored Conflict Manager T-shirts while they settle disputes on the playground. High school mediators have a special room where disputants come for mediation sessions. Mediation programs have been established in more than 300 schools around the country.[43]

Peer groups — effective largely because youths will confide in each other more readily than with authorities at school or parents — tackle a wide range of school problems, many of which affect the bullying problem. For instance, peers can help shy students or newcomers (including immigrants) meet their classmates to make them feel welcome and accepted and enhance multicultural relations. Such a group can demonstrate to the whole school the outlines of acceptable behavior — what is cool and what is not.

Student involvement in general behavior on campus can take many forms. Educational psychologist Valerie Besag commented, "The current silent collusion of the majority leaves some children in physical or emotional danger and others feeling impotent and guilty." To eradicate this, she suggested, "We should use all the tools in our power."

Dr. Besag encouraged the formation of groups similar to the Neighborhood Watch Program on a schoolyard basis.[44] Student participation would make such activities especially effective.

In many cities, for example, Student Response Teams have been established to help diffuse tense situations that otherwise could develop into something violent. It's an admirable effort that benefits the whole school.

Dr. Susan J. Smith of Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, has compiled a manual titled *Nobody Likes a Bully* in which she supports forming a Student Watch Program. "A very important aspect of the program's success is to have every student actively involved in observing and reporting 'bully-like' behavior to the teacher," she said.

Dr. Smith suggests that each elementary class should have a special Student Watch Representative who is assigned to report any type of bullying that is observed. The Student Watch Representative, along with other jobs such as checking homework and erasing the boards, would rotate on a daily basis so that students take turns at different responsibilites.[45]

Since bullying victims tend to be weaker than average, Dr. Floyd recommends that it may be helpful for such children to become involved in some kind of physical training program — perhaps karate or weight training.[46]

Terrence Webster-Doyle has written a book for children about using karate in solving conflict non-violently. Webster-Doyle, who has taught karate for more than 25 years, said he wrote *Facing the Double-Edged Sword* especially for "young people who have been bullied and have felt trapped between the desire for revenge and the desire to work things out peacefully."

In the book, he cites some examples of bullying situations and gives role-playing techniques for children to practice responding non-violently to conflict. Webster-Doyle also has given some suggestions about how to solve conflict

non-violently, and he advises children, their family and teachers to come up with additional alternatives.

One of his suggestions is to make friends with the bully. "Treat the bully as a friend instead of an enemy," he advises kids. "I don't know a bully who doesn't need admiration and respect." Another tactic is to use humor. "You can turn a scary situation into a funny one, but be careful," he warns, "don't make fun of the bully."

Just walking away from the situation is a simple, yet often overlooked way to end conflict before it begins, Webster-Doyle noted. Similar to simply walking away is to ignore the threats. "You hear the threats and you turn and walk away from the bully, even though the bully is calling you a coward and trying to get you angry enough to react," he said. A final alternative is to reason with the bully. "Perhaps you and the bully can talk it out," he suggests. "If you don't argue or get angry, if you act friendly, you might convince the bully not to hurt you."[47]

Parents and classmates too often aggravate the school bullying problem by telling children to fight back, Dr. Slaby noted. "There are strategies of negotiating: ignoring; talking back in a non-provocative manner; seeking support from parents, peers and teachers; and facing down the provoker without retaliation," he explained.

"Perhaps our schools and our culture are remiss in teaching how to be assertive without being aggressive, and by assertive I mean standing up for one's rights, holding one's ground, without becoming hostile," Dr. Slaby said.[48]

Such frank judgments, substantiated by years of research, tell us that not some, but many of our children are suffering from schoolyard bullying. And often they suffer in silence. This is an adult problem as much or more than it is the children's problem. It requires adult understanding and adult solutions.

Anti-bullying efforts can be effective. In Norway, where a nationwide campaign against bullying was initiated in 1983, largely under the guidance of Dr. Olweus, bullying and victim problems were reduced by 50 percent in two years. The program includes a network of action by teachers, parents and students.[49]

Whatever form intervention takes, experts urge that it should begin as early in school life as possible.

"Clearly, whether a child is a bully or victim, intervention makes sense, and since the pattern is likely to be pretty well set by age 7 or 8, *early* intervention makes the best sense," according to an April 1988 *Parents* magazine article on bullies. As Dr. Dodge pointed out in the article, "It's easier to do something about it at age 5 than at age 15."[50]

Dr. Eron put it succinctly: "As our data on the stability of aggressive behavior imply, it is important to intervene early in the lives of youngsters who

show signs of developing an aggressive, antisocial lifestyle. By the time they reach adolescence, it may be too late."[51]

In his recently published book *Before It's Too Late: Why Some Kids Get Into Trouble — And What Parents Can Do About It*, Dr. Samenow warns, "All the information that I have gathered leads to one inescapable conclusion: Corrective measures must be taken as early as possible with the child who is already showing signs of heading in a direction that will bring him into repeated and increasingly serious conflict with the world around him."[52]

Such frank judgments, substantiated by years of research, tell us that not some, but many, of our children are suffering from schoolyard bullying. And often they suffer in silence. This is an adult problem as much or more than it is the children's problem. It requires adult understanding and adult solutions.

Solon, the ancient Greek philosopher, said, "There can be no justice until those of us who are unaffected by crime become as indignant as those who are."

This poignant sentiment recognizes that all of us really are affected by crime and violence, at least indirectly. It further suggests that we need to attend to the ambivalence and misunderstanding about bullying at the same time as we address the problem's immediate concerns.

Current statistics advise that the number of those *directly* victimized is rising at such a rate that the count soon will outnumber those not directly affected, unless things are done by the indignant and able. Victims as well as bullies need our help now.

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Resources

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Appendix

Schoolyard bullying, like most other social problems, requires a thorough understanding of its scope and severity before effective prevention strategies can be administered. A valuable tool in this validation process can be surveys that identify both student and parent attitudes about, and experiences with, bullying.

Presented here are two sample surveys, one for students and another for parents. Both have been field tested in several schools throughout the country. The formats have proven to be easily understandable, and the results are consistent with the general body of existing information on bullying.

The two surveys were drafted to complement each other. The student survey, similar in design to the survey used by Dr. Dan Olweus in his premier research in Scandinavia, is prepared for use with classes of fifth- through eighth-grade students. With optional discussion before and after, the survey can be completed in one class period. It is self-explanatory.

The adult survey should be completed by the parents of the students who participated in the survey. It can either be mailed to them or delivered by their children. Return should be requested the following day.

Is bullying a problem in your school, and if so, how serious is it? These are the obvious concerns identified by the surveys. This information, correlated with the parental perceptions and attitudes about bullying, can help determine what degree of support your prevention program likely will receive from students' homes.

Other correlations can help determine appropriate prevention and intervention strategies. For instance, are new kids more often subjected to bullying? Do kids with fewer friends experience bullying more? Both issues can be resolved with programs identified in this book. Are there problem areas where bullying regularly occurs? Better supervision or School Watch programs can alleviate this problem.

The survey also accomplishes another critical objective. Bringing the problem out into the open — communicating concerns — is an important step toward gaining support from students, parents and staff for an overall bullying prevention program.

"Set Straight On Bullies"
Student Survey

Sometimes adults forget what it was like to be a student. They don't remember the good things...or the bad. So you need to tell them. Please respond to this *"Set Straight on Bullies" Student Survey* honestly and accurately. *You do not have to put your name on this survey.*

School_____ Date_____
Grade_____ Age_____ Height_____ Weight_____

I am a:
- ☐ girl
- ☐ boy

Check the box ☐ next to your best answer(s) for each question. All questions and answers relate to this year and last year only.

1. How many years have you been going to this school?
   - ☐ Less than a year
   - ☐ 1 - 2 years
   - ☐ 3 - 4 years
   - ☐ 5 or more years

2. What is your favorite time at school?
   - ☐ Classroom time
   - ☐ Recess time
   - ☐ Lunch time
   - ☐ Gym
   - ☐ Other _____

3. What do you like most about school?
   - ☐ Learning, classes, teachers
   - ☐ Special activities and programs
   - ☐ Being with friends
   - ☐ Sports
   - ☐ Other things _____

4. How many close friends do you have (that you see and talk to almost every day)?
   - ☐ None
   - ☐ One or two
   - ☐ A few
   - ☐ Lots

5. About how many kids do you say hello to and talk to once in a while?
   - ☐ None
   - ☐ Just a few
   - ☐ About 10 or 20
   - ☐ Almost everyone

6. How many kids do you think consider you a friend?
   - ☐ None
   - ☐ One or two
   - ☐ A few
   - ☐ Lots

7. Compared to other students, how many friends do you have?
   - ☐ More
   - ☐ Less
   - ☐ About the same

8. What is your most important worry while at school?
   - ☐ Learning, classes, teachers
   - ☐ Attending special activities and programs
   - ☐ Being alone
   - ☐ Other misbehaving and disruptive students; bullies
   - ☐ Using the bathrooms
   - ☐ Other things _____

9. Are you or have you ever been scared to come to school?
   - ☐ Never
   - ☐ Sometimes (once or twice a month)
   - ☐ Regularly (once or twice a week)
   - ☐ All the time

The following questions are specifically about bullying. "Bullying" is when one or more students pick on another student. This includes teasing, insulting, threatening; excluding (not talking to or playing with on purpose); stealing; and shoving, hitting or kicking. Remember, the questions and your answers apply to this year and last year only.

10. Have you seen bullying at school?
    - ☐ Never
    - ☐ Once in a while (once or twice a month)
    - ☐ Frequently (once or twice a week)
    - ☐ All the time

11. If you have seen bullying at school, what did you do?
    - ☐ I haven't seen any bullying
    - ☐ Nothing, just watched
    - ☐ Ignored it, none of my business
    - ☐ Tried to stop the bully or help the victim
    - ☐ Asked for help from adults or other students

12. What do adults at school do when they see bullying?
    - ☐ Nothing, ignore it
    - ☐ Stop it and tell everyone to leave
    - ☐ Stop it and help solve the problem
    - ☐ Other _____

13. Are you now or have you ever been bullied at school?
    - ☐ Never
    - ☐ Sometimes (once or twice a month)
    - ☐ Regularly (once or twice a week)
    - ☐ Every day

14. How were you bullied?
    - ☐ I haven't been bullied
    - ☐ Teased, insulted, threatened
    - ☐ Excluded (not talked to or played with on purpose)
    - ☐ Something was taken or stolen from me
    - ☐ Shoved, hit, kicked
    - ☐ With a weapon (gun, knife) — what kind _____
    - ☐ Other ways, such as _____

15. How many kids bullied you?
    - ☐ I haven't been bullied
    - ☐ One
    - ☐ A small group (two to five)
    - ☐ Lots (more than five)

16. Why do you think some students are bullied?
    - ☐ I don't know
    - ☐ They look or act different
    - ☐ They are too smart — "teachers' pets"
    - ☐ They are smaller, weaker or younger
    - ☐ They just ask for it or deserve it
    - ☐ Other reasons_____

17. If you are or were bullied, why do you think it happens?
- ☐ I haven't been bullied
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I look or act different
- ☐ I always do well in class
- ☐ I'm smaller and weaker
- ☐ I guess I just deserve it
- ☐ Other reasons_____

18. Why are some students bullies?
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ They are bigger and stronger
- ☐ They think it's fun
- ☐ To get even for being bullied themselves
- ☐ To "show off" or impress their friends
- ☐ There is fighting at their home
- ☐ Other reasons_____

19. If you bully other students, why do you do it?
- ☐ I don't bully
- ☐ To get even
- ☐ So they know who is in charge
- ☐ My friends and I think it's fun
- ☐ I was taught it's right to hit someone that bothers me
- ☐ Other reasons_____

20. Has an adult at school talked to your class about bullying?
- ☐ No
- ☐ Once, and it was very helpful
- ☐ Once, but they really don't understand
- ☐ Regularly, and it helps a lot
- ☐ Regularly, but it doesn't seem to help

21. Have you tried to talk to anyone about being bullied?
- ☐ I have not been bullied
- ☐ No
- ☐ A teacher or other adult at school
- ☐ My parents or other adult I live with
- ☐ A brother or sister
- ☐ A friend

22. What advice have you been given to stop being bullied?
- ☐ I have not been bullied
- ☐ None
- ☐ Try to talk to the bully and tell him or her to stop
- ☐ Ignore the problem and it eventually will go away
- ☐ Stand up to the bully and hit (or tease) him back
- ☐ Tell an adult about the problem
- ☐ Other advice _____

23. What advice do you have for other students being bullied?
- ☐ None
- ☐ Stay away from places where bullies hang out
- ☐ Stand up to the bully and hit (or tease) back
- ☐ Ask an adult for help
- ☐ Have bigger friends to protect you
- ☐ Don't do things or go places by yourself
- ☐ Other ideas _____

24. What can adults at school do to help stop bullying?
- ☐ Supervise the campus better
- ☐ Start student patrols or "Student Watch" programs
- ☐ Make rules against bullying and punish bullies
- ☐ Conduct class discussions about bullying prevention
- ☐ Help students to work together and make friends
- ☐ Other ideas _____

25. What can parents do to help stop bullying at school?
- ☐ Get involved with their kids' schoolwork and social activities
- ☐ Be more understanding about the problem
- ☐ Tell someone at school to help stop the problem
- ☐ Other ideas _____

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"Set Straight On Bullies"
Adult Survey

Research indicates one in 10 students is regularly victimized by schoolyard bullies. Disruptive behavior by other students is rated as the top concern among students, higher even than academic success. Bullying has been around forever. Yet despite its physical and emotional abuses, often little or no support is provided to victims and even less attention is given to dealing with the bullies. Almost everyone has been touched by some aspect of bullying — as a victim, bully or witness. Hopefully, this survey will help put the problem in perspective for everyone.

"Bullying" is defined as one or more students inflicting physical, verbal or emotional abuse on another student or students.

Please respond to the *"Set Straight on Bullies" Adult Survey* honestly and accurately. This research will help to develop appropriate strategies to respond to the bullying phenomenon.

This survey is strictly confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Age _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female Occupation _____
City/State of residence _____
I attended grammar school(s) in City/State:

_____

Junior high school(s):

_____

Senior high school(s):

_____

1. What did you like most about school?
   - ☐ Learning, classes, teachers
   - ☐ Social activities (dances, special events and assemblies)
   - ☐ Being with friends
   - ☐ Sports
   - ☐ Other things _____

2. What was your most important concern at school?
   - ☐ Learning, classes, teachers
   - ☐ Social activities (dances, special events and assemblies)
   - ☐ Being alone
   - ☐ Misbehaving and disruptive students
   - ☐ Personal safety and not being bullied (hurt or teased)
   - ☐ Using the bathrooms
   - ☐ Other things _____

3. Do you remember your schoolyard bully?
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Yes, vaguely
   - ☐ Yes, by name!

4. If you saw bullying at school, what did you do?
   - ☐ N/A
   - ☐ Nothing, just watched
   - ☐ Ignored it, none of my business
   - ☐ Tried to stop the bully or help the victim
   - ☐ Sought help from school staff or other students

5. Were you ever the victim of bullying at school?
   - ☐ Never
   - ☐ Once or twice
   - ☐ Regularly

6. If you were victimized, how?
   - ☐ N/A
   - ☐ Teased, insulted, threatened
   - ☐ Excluded (not talked to or played with)
   - ☐ Something was stolen from me
   - ☐ Shoved, hit, kicked
   - ☐ All the ways mentioned above
   - ☐ Other ways, such as _____

7. Did you bully or participate in bullying other students?
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Once or twice
   - ☐ Regularly

8. Why do you think some students were the target of bullying?
   - ☐ They looked or acted different
   - ☐ They were too smart — "teacher's pets"
   - ☐ They were smaller, weaker or stronger
   - ☐ They just "asked for it"
   - ☐ Other reasons_____

9. Why do you think some students were bullies?
   - ☐ They were bigger and stronger and wanted to prove it
   - ☐ They liked or thought it was fun to hurt other students
   - ☐ To "get even" for being bullied themselves
   - ☐ Someone at home taught them hitting was the way to resolve problems
   - ☐ To "show off"
   - ☐ They were just "jerks"
   - ☐ Other reasons_____

10. In which grades do you recall bullying being the biggest problem?
   - ☐ Elementary
   - ☐ Middle school or junior high
   - ☐ Senior high

11. As an adult, do you consider any of your peers or business associates to be bullies?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

12. If you know any adult bullies, do you suspect they were bullies as kids?
   - ☐ N/A
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

13. What is your opinion of schoolyard bullying?
   - ☐ "No big deal," just kids being kids
   - ☐ A problem, but not serious
   - ☐ A serious problem that requires immediate attention

14. In your opinion, is schoolyard bullying preventable?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

15. Who is responsible to solve the schoolyard bullying problem?
   - ☐ The kids involved
   - ☐ School personnel (better supervision, stricter discipline)
   - ☐ Parents and guardians (better communication, parenting skills)
   - ☐ All of the above

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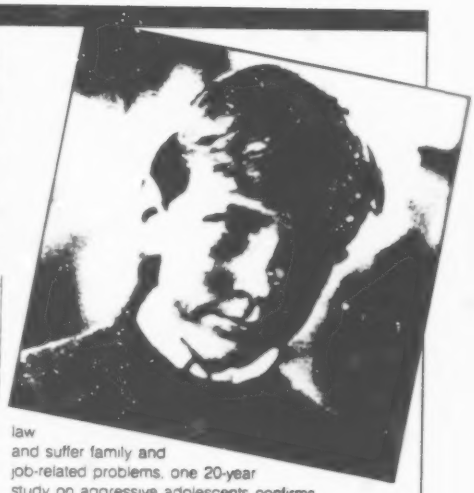
SET STRAIGHT ON *Bullies*



A NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER FILM

Whoever thought bullies were all talk and no action needs to view the film "Set Straight on Bullies." The National School Safety Center film was produced to help school administrators educate faculty, parents and students about the severity of the schoolyard bullying problem. The message is clear: bullying hurts everyone.

The 18-minute educational film tells the story of a bullying victim and how the problem adversely affects his life as well as the lives of the bully, other students, parents and educators.

"I'm always scared. I'm scared to come to school ...I don't want to be afraid any more," the bullying victim says, In fact, NSSC based the film on research indicating one in seven students is either a bully or a victim of bullying. One recent study by a national education association discovered that students rate the disruptive and inappropriate behavior (bulling, theft,etc.) of their classmates as their chief school-related concern. Of the bullies whose behavior goes unchecked, they are five times more likely than their classmates to grow up and have problems with the law and suffer family and job-related problems, one 20-year study on aggressive adolescents confirms.

Produced by Bonneville Media Communications in Salt Lake City, Utah, "Set Straight on Bullies" is NSSC's second film with a safe schools message. The first, "What's Wrong With This Picture?," was marketed to promote awareness for a variety of crime problems on school campuses. A "best seller" by industry standards, the 1985 production also received national awards at the Chicago, New York and Houston film festivals.

A free informational brochure for the film and order form for NSSC's companion handbook, Set Straight on Bullies, *are also available.*

"SET STRAIGHT ON BULLIES"

Please send me _____ copy(ies) of "Set Straight on Bullies." I understand the cost per copy is $40 for VHS or Beta video cassettes and $200 for 16mm film (to cover duplication, postage and handling). *I am enclosing a check payable to the National School Safety Center for* _____. ***Check must accompany order.***

Indicate quantities and formats: _____ VHS _____ Beta _____ 16 mm

Name _____

Title _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail order form together with check to the National School Safety Center, 16830 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200, Encino, CA 91436.

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